URBAN NATIVES: A Prairie time bomb • THE BIBLE: Genesis revisited

CANADA'S WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE

Maclean's

NOVEMBER 11, 1996

Unseasonably cold winds

Late City Edition



Hollinger Inc. CEO Conrad Black

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Conrad Black plots even bigger empire

By JENNIFER WELLS
National Business Correspondent

TORONTO—The Canadian who controls the Western world's third-largest newspaper company tells *Maclean's* there is no reason to be concerned about ownership concentration in the media.

See **BLACK**, page 56

'Human chainsaw' cuts spending

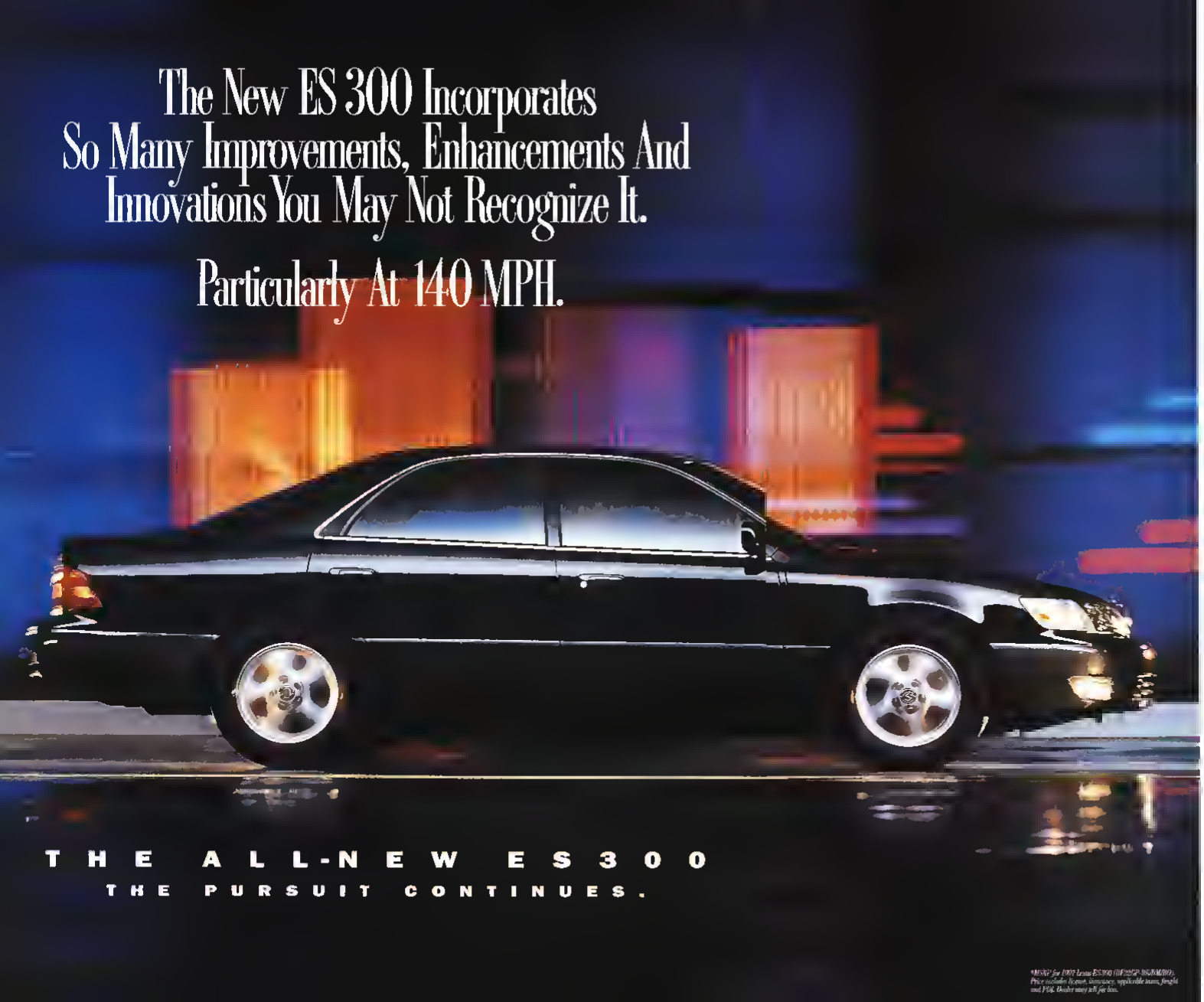


VANCOUVER—David Radler, baronet to press baron Black, worries that people will lose their fear if he and his boss are 'exposed as human.'

See **RADLER**, page 59

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Maclean's CANADA'S WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE

This Week

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COVER PHOTO: PETER BREGG/MACLEAN'S

Cover

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The prince of papers

Conrad Black is the proud, pugilistic owner of 43 per cent of Canada's newspaper circulation, and he wants even more. But the leftist-bashing press baron says there is nothing to fear: using his papers as right-wing bully pulpits would be bad for business.



PETER BREGG/MACLEAN'S

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Prairie time bomb

Crime and poverty cripple a soaring urban native population on the Prairies. Ottawa and the provinces are feuding over paying for social assistance while the crisis grows.



BRIAN SCHLOSSER

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Genesis revisited

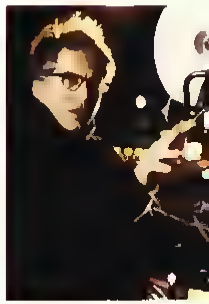
Bible sales are soaring as provocative interpretations of Genesis heighten interest in the origins of humanity.



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Waiting for *Crash*

Media mogul Ted Turner has slammed the brakes on the American release of David Cronenberg's sexually provocative movie.



From The Editor

Warnings of an explosion point



A time bomb is ticking in Saskatchewan. Call it the Triple-30 effect. The province's overall unemployment level is a relatively low five per cent, yet the rate among native men and women is an astonishing 30 per cent. And urban natives make up 39 per cent of the province's 35,000-strong welfare caseload. Taking into account projections from current birth rates that natives could represent 30 per cent of Saskatchewan's population by the year 2020, the dimensions of the problem are all too clear. It is a looming crisis on the dimensions of that confronting Afro-Americans in the cities of the United States.

The story of Saskatchewan is much the same across the Prairies. To be sure, there are encouraging signs, such as the work of the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College at the University of Regina, where more than 1,000 students are enrolled in everything from agriculture and pre-med to business and home economics. There is, as well, the encouraging growth of aboriginal businesses, fuelled by land claims and oil and gas royalties. But the other side of the story is that fully 32 per cent of the federal inmate population of the Prairies, for instance, is aboriginal. In Regina and Saskatoon, which have significant urban native populations, crime increased 11.2 and 7.7 per cent in 1994, respectively. In the country as a whole, by comparison, crime fell that year—the third consecutive annual decrease.

An entire generation of native people has been born into a world of poverty and crime—not to mention roiling opposition to the status quo. They have been flocking to the cities and many of them end up at places like the Souls Harbour Mission House in downtown Regina. *Maclean's* correspondent Dale Eisler joined a throng of people warming themselves there over cups of coffee last week, waiting for the 5 o'clock serving of a hot stew dinner (page 18). Lloyd Barber, the respected former federal Indian land claims commissioner and past president of the University of Regina, declares: "If you extrapolate into the future, there is a pretty explosive point out there."



Mercredi protesting cuts: urgency

The harsh realities of the native situation gave new urgency to a meeting in Calgary last week attended by aboriginal leaders, the premiers of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, and the heads of the two territories. It was called by Ovide Mercredi, national chief of the Assembly of First Nations.

At issue was Ottawa's $5 billion retreat from social program financing and its decision not to cover welfare costs for natives who leave their reserves. Saskatchewan Premier Roy Romanow, who is deeply concerned about the potential for an urban explosion in his province, sternly lectured Ottawa. "You can't run and hide from this situation," he said. The other premiers agreed.

One irony is that, for months, the provinces have been fighting to wrest more control of social programs from Ottawa. No doubt with that in mind, federal Indian Affairs Minister Ron Irwin said he would be happy to take over the welfare rolls for aboriginals—provided that the provinces turned over a further $5 billion. The infighting over cash is truly sad. It diverts attention from potential long-term solutions, such as providing education and employment opportunities. And it does absolutely nothing for people who gather at places like Regina's Souls Harbour Mission House.

Robert Lewis

Newsroom Notes:

The rankings are coming

With the sixth annual report on Canadian universities due out on Nov. 18, a team of *Maclean's* editors and researchers is busy playing beat the clock, working to finalize the 1996 rankings. The process began with a flurry of mailings in early July: each university received a 14-page questionnaire, while the reputational survey went to 3,400 guidance counsellors, academic officials and CEOs. Regina, Manitoba and Memorial universities have rejoined the survey for the first time in four years; all English-speaking universities are taking part.



Dwyer: shifting stats

Meanwhile, the Université de Montréal also announced it was back in the *Maclean's* ranking. In September, project researcher Mary Dwyer began the gruelling two-month process of cross-checking the data. Last week, she and Ottawa statistician Rose Anne Leonard began processing the final numbers. "The results are not final," says Dwyer, "but from an early tally, there seem to be several significant shifts this year." The clock is ticking.

Next week

The U.S. election took place the day after this edition was published. Complete coverage, with a report on the implications for Canada, will be available in the issue published on Nov. 11.

To her parents he was nothing but a HOT RODDER

Her parents just couldn't understand his infatuation with cars, much less hers with him. • But that was before tech school, mechanic and finally, master mechanic. • Now they don't understand how he manages to go through more than a hundred hours of training each year to keep up with everything from on-board computers to ABS brakes. And more than 200 new models introduced each year. • But that's okay. She does. It takes a lot to be an auto technician. To find the best, look for Snap-on® tools and equipment.



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The Mail

Downshifting

I identified strongly with your cover story ("Cashing out," Oct. 28). Seven years ago, I reduced my teaching load, choosing to work part time. Like many individuals in your article, a seemingly isolated event spurred me to make this change. I discovered that my then-seven-year-old daughter was unable to read. She didn't know it. Her school didn't know it. And I, her mother, the English teacher, was almost too busy to notice. You see, I had been serving on school committees, taking university courses, nurturing other people's children, but neglecting my own. Interestingly, my reduced level of income hasn't really damaged my family's lifestyle. We still live in the same house, drive the same (albeit aging) car, take a vacation now and then. We just don't do any impulse shopping and we never carry credit card balances.

Lisa Spano
Kingston, Ont.



PETER MAGUS/MACLEAN'S

Elizabeth and Charles Long: out of necessity or choice, boomers are accepting a simpler life

I found it intriguing that most of the downshifters you interviewed owned oceanfront or lakefront property, wrote books or edited magazines. Judging by your article, apparently one first needs to attain a certain level of wealth before one can even consider the luxury of downshifting. If you had managed to find even one *average* Canadian family who was considering changing its lifestyle to a simpler one, then your article would have had more credibility. As it was, it was another obnoxious look at a small percentage of Canadians who are, or were, not wise enough to realize that working 19 hours a day is folly.

Peter van Geest,
London, Ont.

What utter trash. Here you go again setting so-called trends through the perspective of the baby boomers. A decade ago, you reported on their lavish lifestyles. Now, out of necessity, or choice, these same people are accepting a simpler lifestyle. But once again, by the baby boomers' standard, this downsizing has become a trend. What about my younger generation? We are the highly educated and underemployed class of people living quite similarly to those individuals in your article. We are forced to be frugal in order to just survive. For us, this is hardly a trend.

Jonathan Spivak
Toronto

I am very cynical about the more fortunate Canadians who can "cash out." Many in Nova Scotia would enjoy the opportunity to be stressed out because of the opportunities that these people choose to leave behind.

Joan D. Kirby
Halifax

Rural living is a culture in its own regard. You state that "downshifters are decamping to the country, where the living is cheaper and they can set up their own businesses. They are remaking not only the workplace, but even the landscape itself." Severing of farmland to make rural, non-farm lots has become an issue to the rural community. Not all the changes are physical. The mixing of ex-urbanites can cause tensions when individuals have different perspectives, values and knowledge. But there are also opportunities for both groups to share perspectives and for bringing business to small communities. We welcome our urban brothers and sisters, but we ask them to be sensitive to the processes around them: the production of food, the neighborly relationships and the strong community ties. We invite them to bring their strengths and talents to our community, but ask them to please not create a diluted city.

Becky Bearinger
Guelph, Ont.

Flags and bags

"I didn't say I talked to him," (Canada Notes, Oct. 28) reports on Prime Minister Jean Chrétien's statements to students in Dauphin, Man., that he regularly visited with a homeless man in Ottawa. Perhaps Chrétien would like to talk to Heritage Minister Sheila Copps about a program to distribute sleeping bags, emblazoned with the Canadian flag, to the homeless. With an election on the horizon, why not add a picture of Chrétien and Copps?

Donald W. Cofell,
Stirling, Ont.

Anglo funding

A "shocked and appalled and insulted" Anglo artist complaining that he did not get a grant from External Affairs because of an alleged "Quebec bias" gets nearly two pages ("Undiplomatic service," The Arts, Oct. 28). But Anglo universities in Quebec getting three to four times more grants from Ottawa and Quebec than numbers justify? Fewer than 70 words, even though the actual amounts of taxpayer money involved are much larger ("Funding for Anglos," Canada Notes). I guess Quebec-bashing, à la Diane (Hang the separatists) Francis sells more copies in the Rest of Canada nowadays than responsible journalism. Too bad for national unity.

Remi Alaurent,
Montreal

Scottish secession

I was disappointed that in the article "A nation in search of a modern Braveheart" (World, Oct. 28), there was only a superficial examination of the issue on the extent to which the Scottish secessionist movement is a racial separatist, rather than a civic nationalist, movement. While it is true that, to quote from Scottish National Party Leader Alex Salmond "not every nationalist movement is malign," every movement that advances political separation based on race is.

Sheldon Warnock
Toronto

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THE MAIL

Nation's true wealth

The Oct. 7 Special Report ("The heat is on") reconfirms my belief that we live in an era in which our leaders in the cabinet and in the Bank of Canada have placed the horse before the carriage. Inflation, interest rates, debt levels and unemployment rates are not numbers to be manipulated in and of themselves in order to produce economic prosperity, they are merely indicators of human activity. The wealth of our nation depends on the qualitative aspects of our economy: the skill level of our workers, entrepreneurial spirit, job security, loyalty between employers and employees, work ethic, the ability to adapt, to innovate and to compete, and, above all, our aspirations for a better future. Zero inflation, zero debt and low interest rates mean nothing if Canadians are underemployed, scared and undervalued. Economists such as Paul Summerville should ask the average worker or business owner about how the Canadian economy is doing instead of asking investors in Frankfurt, or looking at the numerical projections made by using the paradigms of a dismal science.

Derek Eng
Victoria



Lower mortgage rates: merely indicators of human activity

Three cheers for Pierre Fortin ("Inflation or jobs?"). He correctly zeroes in on our number 1 problem, that of the Bank of Canada. Why has this institution, which was created to relieve us from the clutches of the international money vultures, been allowed to be turned into their instrument of enslavement? Why, when it once provided the bulk of our credit needs for our domestic requirements, at a low cost, that reverted back to our treasury, is it now involved in less than those needs, requiring vast borrowings from offshore, with billions leaving in interest charges to New York City and elsewhere? Clearly, we have gone full circle and are again in the day of feudal barons who, with the compliance of a friendly Crown, are ransacking the countryside. We very much need another Oliver Cromwell.

Philip Lindenback,
Weekes, Sask.

In "The heat is on" you state that "Many MPs demanded further cuts, including Martin's own parliamentary secretary, Liberal MP Robert Nault, who advocated a 20-per-cent cut last summer." Please be informed that I, not my colleague, Robert Nault (Kenora/Rainy River), am the parliamentary secretary to the minister of finance. I am not aware whether Mr. Nault made the comments about employment insurance premiums that were attributed to him.

Barry Campbell, MP,
Ottawa

'Everybody's problem'

I completely agree with Dr. Jim Wilkes ("Children in danger," Canada, Sept. 30) when he says that the staggering problem of child abuse in Canada is everyone's problem. I've been having trouble sleeping since reading the article, and often when I respond to my own babies' cries in the night I am haunted by the spectre of other Canadian children whose cries are being met with fists, burns and even socks being stuffed into their mouths. Yesterday, I began calling every mother I know because I think it's time that those of us who believe it's wrong to maim children began standing up for those children whose parents do not.

Joadie Jurgova,
Newport, N.S.

Addicts' alternatives

The most important point missed in your otherwise excellent article "Back to the basics for addicts" (Health, Oct. 21) is the need for balance in the new life of the recovering alcoholic. I am a member of Alcoholics Anonymous, and the only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking. The fellowship has survived because of the compassion members have for each other, the willingness to share, the importance of attending meetings and, yes, studying and applying the suggestions of the 12 Steps and the Big Book. They are suggestions, not rules. The Muckers seem to be swapping one addiction for another, which, in the AA experience, has often proven disastrous. If the Muckers program works, that's OK by me, but leave my beautiful and gentle AA recovery program alone.

Vivian H.,
Vancouver

Where power resides

In "The power game" (Cover, Oct. 14), you write of B.C. Premier Glen Clark that "his knowledge of the national scene is limited by the fact that he has spent all of one day in Quebec." So now we know where the national scene is at. You emphasize that point over and over again: Quebec, Quebec, Quebec, centre of the national scene, power and influence.

E. M. Davies
Abbotsford, B.C.

"The opinions the PM needs" is cause for serious concern in a democratic society. The advisers, unelected, ambitious, powerful and, quite often, far more cerebral than their political bosses, are permitted to shape the nation's destiny without the bother of being elected. What happened to the deputy ministers? Is their advice, usually based on years of experience, now being replaced by that of short-term appointees?

Jean G. Boulet,
Ottawa

Blood-donor plea

I have just read the letter from Stella Wallace-Chagnon ("Last blood donation," The Mail, Oct. 21) and I beg her to please continue donating blood. I am a cancer patient and my life depends on being transfused. So much negative talk about the past problems is discouraging people from making donations. Please help keep us alive—we are counting on you.

Orma Betts,
Richmond Hill, Ont.

Roberto and Marg

The Roberto Alomar incident was handled with cowardice by the baseball establishment ("Dropping the ball," Sports, Oct. 14). But there was an obvious penalty to impose. Alomar should have been transferred immediately to the Cincinnati Reds. He and Marge Schott deserve each other.

F. I. Gould,
Toronto



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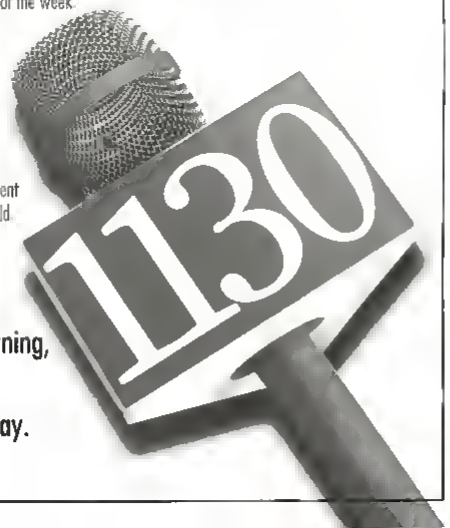
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THE MAIL

Delivering junk mail

According to George Radwanski, the policy consultant hired by Diane Marleau, the minister in charge of the post office, Canada Post has engaged in unrestrained competition with the private sector and has suffered huge losses since 1986 ("Battling Canada Post," Business, Oct. 21). On the basis of his report, Marleau ordered the post office to stop delivering junk mail, a profitable part of its operation. Why shouldn't Canada Post compete with the private sector? At least when my tax money goes to a public corporation like Canada Post, I am part owner of it. Junk mail has been tolerated at my house only because I knew it made money for my Canada Post, which is committed to keeping communications open even in the most remote parts of Canada. If junk mail is to be delivered by anyone else, I won't accept it.

Margaret Tyson
Ottawa

'No-brain escapism'

I was pleased to see that in your review of *The Merchants of Venus*, you resisted the temptation to join the many people - mainly men, who like to make fun of the readers of Harlequin romances ("Billion-dollar romance," Books, Oct. 21). When it comes to low stress, no-brain escapism, there is not a lot of difference between a Harlequin romance and the male equivalent, a Hockey Night in Canada doubleheader.

Michael Craig
Toronto

Hospital closures

Although you gave a good description of the proposed hospital closures in Sudbury, Ont., in your article "Condition critical" (Canada, Oct. 14), the major concerns of the health care workers were not fully addressed. We are frightened, as stated, but the fear goes far beyond that of self-preservation. In its report, the commission had reduced the number of acute-care beds to critical levels in a city that is the referral centre of the North. The commission has removed services from the hospital sector to the community level, without including the true cost of implementation or requiring the creation of such services. The commission's report brings the Conservative government one step closer to privatizing our health care system by throwing health care services into the community where the lowest private enterprise bidder gets the package. The commission may say it works at arm's length, but it appears the report simply fancies up numbers that were predetermined.

Jan Hilt LeBlanc
Sudbury, Ont.

The Road Ahead

Nov. 11: A pause that refreshes

The observance of Remembrance Day is becoming a distant memory for many Canadians. Some simply do not know why we pause for two minutes at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month to reflect and remember. For many it is simply a day off work or school—another statutory holiday. For others, with busy lives and important things to accomplish, it is a nuisance. Still others, who profoundly misunderstand the reason for the event, choose to attack those who would "celebrate war." For all of us, peacetime has become a way of life. Conflict that dissolves into armed combat seems not possible in Canada today.

When I was growing up, my father used to say over and over again: "I may not agree with what you are saying, but I will fight to the death to preserve your right to say it." He almost did, by volunteering in the Second World War. He was lucky, he came home. He was able to enjoy the fruits of the prosperous peacetime that has survived for us to this day. His older brother was not so lucky. He died defending this freedom that we now take for granted.

With each passing November, the meaning within my Dad's oft-repeated creed becomes more clear to me. I dearly value life here in Canada. I cherish our flawed but workable democracy. It has allowed us all to muddle along in pursuit of dreams, optimistic and unafraid. When the important political and philosophical disagreements become bitter and acrimonious, when left meets right, when race, religion and sex become the focus of attack, and accusations fly, will each of us be able to make his statement to our adversaries?

Can each of us look our so-called foes in the eye and say, "I don't like your point of view. I think you are wrongheaded, meanspirited, pigheaded and just plain stupid. But I will die before I will let someone refute your right to express your opinion"? Or will our valued freedom of expression lose the battle to self-interest, bitterness, greed, hate and envy?

Many of us have parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts and dear friends who died for this cause. My hope is that we Canadians can put our differences aside for two minutes on this Nov. 11 and say to them: "Thank you. We can and we will preserve this simple thought which has brought us so far, because it is the single most important thing that we can do to preserve this precious moment in our civilization."

Marilyn Baker,
Richmond, B.C.

The Road Ahead invites readers to advance specific solutions to Canada's political, social and economic problems. Unpublished submissions may run condensed as regular letters or appear on an electronic bulletin board.

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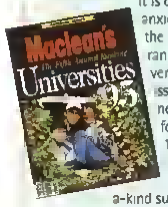
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WHAT MATTERS TO CANADIANS

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Column



Diane Francis

The vital industry that is largely ignored

One of Canada's greatest competitive advantages lies in our trees and the ability to harvest them efficiently. Forestry is by far the country's most important industry: it is the number 1 net exporter (automobile exports fall to second spot when imports in the same sector are factored in) and one of the largest private sector employers. Besides being a cornerstone of our standard of living, forestry also adds huge wealth to the nation because the lion's share of production is exported. Despite its significance, the forest industry is not appreciated.

It has not been well defended or nurtured by Canadian politicians. International environmental groups routinely libel our forest industry, particularly British Columbia's. One group even recruited high-profile U.S. movie stars and other showbiz personalities to sign a petition demanding that clear-cutting and other practices should be stopped. Their criticisms were selective and mostly inaccurate. And yet few, if any, Canadian politicians leaped to the defence of this vital industry.

Instead, our politicians are often as much of a problem as ignorant foreigners. Most have been more preoccupied with plundering the industry through excessive taxes and red tape. The worst culprit of all is the B.C. NDP government, which first criticized, then taxed forestry companies excessively. The tax, set up in 1994, was to go into a forest renewal fund to pay for replanting and damage others may have caused. Then on Sept. 12, the province's deficit-challenged New Democrats decided to loot their own forestry renewal fund of $500 million. Instead of spending it on the environment or giving it back to the industry, they are putting the money into general revenues because they have overspent.

> Forestry is the top exporter and one of the largest employers—but politicians don't do enough to nurture it

Canada has nothing to be ashamed of when it comes to cutting down trees, and yet some of our critics have stretched the truth by comparing Canada to Brazil, with its disastrous policy of rainforest defoliation. Part of the problem is the incorrect perception by some politicians and policy-makers that forestry is a dying industry. That's why they ignore it. Instead, they instantly leap at the chance to throw our tax dollars behind anything that smacks of the so-called New Economy industries, such as high tech or aerospace. This is an ignorant strategy. While it is important to build these industries, it is equally important to appreciate that Canadians enjoy, and will continue to enjoy, a high living standard mostly because we cut down trees, mine metals and minerals and produce massive quantities of oil, natural gas, coal, uranium and electricity. Still, our resource industries are much maligned, with forestry the most battered.

However, a solution is quite simple and would go a long way towards correcting the misperceptions and misbehavior. Our tree cutters should lobby to close down all the ministries or departments of forestry. Then they should insist that their industry be supervised by the country's various ministries or departments of agriculture. This reform would reap several benefits. Most importantly, it would reflect reality. Trees are simply gigantic vegetables, and the unpopular clear-cutting is the equivalent of what grain farmers do seasonally. Forestry companies are nothing more than gigantic, capital-intensive farmers. And farmers around the world are the most coddled and subsidized sector of all. So to be consistent, Canada's politicians should actually nurture and coddle the country's hewers of wood.

Once this reality sinks in, our politicians will be able to easily defend the industry from the public relations beating it has been taking. They could point out the facts. That would put the lie to any comparison so-called environmentalists make between this country's forestry practices and the disappearance of the Brazilian rainforest. And clear-cutting is not a problem because it's what farmers all over the world do at every harvest. On top of that, the politicians should remind environmentalists that wood building products are considerably more benign environmentally than alternatives such as aluminum, steel, concrete, bricks, plastics or cement. These materials require a far greater output from power-generating plants—whether they be nuclear, coal, gas or oil. It takes 73,080 kilowatts of energy to produce one ton of aluminum, 13,920 kW for steel and just 580 kW for lumber.

As for replanting, Canada leads the world and has forged enlightened policies over the past few years. In 1960, less than 10 per cent of logged areas were replanted with seedlings. Now, 50 per cent is replanted, with the rest managed for natural regeneration. In British Columbia's designated replanting areas, there are three trees planted for every one harvested, netting a survival rate of 87 per cent, compared with 60 per cent just a decade ago.

Instead of acknowledging this reality, harmful initiatives continue. A few years ago, Greenpeace in Germany collected the equivalent of millions of dollars to fight clear-cutting on British Columbia's coast. One German documentary dubbed Canada "Brazil North." Boycotts against Canadian pulp and paper products have been organized.

Canadian governments should question why the Germans don't instead devote their energies to repairing or replacing the dozens of Chernobyl-type nuclear reactors that ring Germany in former communist countries? Putting down the enemies of this important industry should be a political priority. And nurturing and coddling this industry to create more jobs and export income should be a top political priority.

Opening Notes

Edited by BARBARA WICKENS



Clinton on the campaign trail: scratchers

Pressing the flesh takes its painful toll

Campaigning to be president of the United States is always a long, arduous job. But towards the end of the current campaign, President Bill Clinton found it to be even more perilous than usual. That is because Clinton loves to glad-hand along the rope barriers where supporters line up to shake hands with the candidate. But that up-close and personal contact has come at a price for Clinton: he became the victim of so-called scratchers, fans who like to dig their fingernails into the President's hands to claw off part of his skin as a souvenir. Hollywood and rock stars are all too familiar with the groupie technique, but it is something new on the campaign trail. The President's hands have been covered with red scratch marks on occasion, and security personnel have been forced to pry fans' hands off Clinton. Some have also tried to tear off his wedding band and watch, forcing the President to hand those objects to aides before he goes along the rope line. Another fear is picking up germs from touching hundreds of hands a day. White House spokesman Michael McCurry says that Clinton now washes his hands with a special disinfectant after every rope line, in case somebody has a cold or infection." The perils of hands-on politics.

Stolen goods

The publication *Public Accounts of Canada* may look like a dry, dusty tome, but it reveals some eye-opening figures. A volume for 1995-1996, which the receiver general released last week, shows that the federal government is having trouble with thieves. From cutlery to canoes to grenade launchers, the government lost a total of $3,325,801 in property to "an offence or other illegal act." At one end of the scale is the disappearance of $128 worth of miscellaneous clothing and $3,100 in sleeping bags from Indian and Northern Affairs. At the other end, was theft of high technology, with a total of $2 million worth of computers and related equipment going missing from all government departments. Revenue Canada, proving that it is more adept at taxing property than keeping it, was the greatest victim, losing $348,961 worth of computers. Says Revenue Canada representative Chris Kealey: "It is a matter of concern, no question about that."

Irish influences

People like D'Arcy McGee, a Father of Confederation, and store owner Timothy Eaton are part of Canada's rich Irish heritage. But even though there are about four million Canadians who have some Irish ancestry, the role of the Irish in Canada is not well known. "It is a story that certainly isn't taught to students," says Michael Kenneally, a Montreal literature professor and executive-director of the Canadian Irish Studies Foundation, who is working to change the situation. The foundation is raising money for an undergraduate Irish studies program at Concordia University. Judging by the high-profile names of the foundation's honorary patrons and directors, Kenneally is not alone in his concerns. Federal Finance Minister Paul Martin, Conservative Leader Jean Charest and Paul Dempsey, Ireland's ambassador to Canada, are honorary patrons, while CEOs Laurent Beaudoin of Bombardier Inc. and John Cleghorn from the Royal Bank of Canada are among the directors. The Irish experience in Canada has wide implications. Calling that experience "a model of cultural and linguistic co-operation," Brian O'Neill Gallery, the foundation's vice-chairman, says that "it provides useful lessons about the preservation of Canadian unity."



McGee: high profiles

INs and OUTs

Radio can be a comfortable medium, with an announcer's voice becoming as familiar as a best friend's. But even in radio, frequencies change.

TUNING OUT. After 27 years with CBC Radio News, **Bob Oxley**, 59, retired last week from *The World at Six*, the public broadcaster's half-hour news broadcast each weeknight.

TUNING IN. **Russ Germain**, another longtime CBC announcer, takes over from Oxley, joining co-host Karen Gross. Germain's move leaves Judy Maddren to host CBC Radio's morning news program, *The World at Eight*, on her own.

TUNING OUT. **Wally Croutar**, 73, dean of Toronto's radio hosts, retired after 50 years as CFRB's morning man.

TUNING IN. Comic **Tad Woloshyn**, replaces Croutar in Canada's biggest and most competitive market.

A crackdown on Alberta's wells

In its largest single crackdown ever, the Alberta Energy and Utilities Board has ordered about 150 oil and gas companies to close down roughly 500 service wells in the province. The problem: companies had not filed reports, due by Sept. 1, on tests that they must conduct each year on sealing mechanisms called packers. In certain kinds of wells, packers are required to help guard against groundwater contamination or other leakages. The closure orders were not prompted by any packer failures. Instead, for the second year, packer tests are being managed under a new regulatory program that emphasizes increased industry responsibility and accountability. The board issued 200 closure orders last year, but only after an extended grace period and extra reminders. This year fewer companies actually missed the deadline, but the board is acting more quickly. Some of the companies that received closure orders may have conducted the tests, but failed to file the documentation. Others will have to arrange to have their packer tests done if they want to return their wells to service. "We know that industry is working hard to adjust to our new processes," says Bob Willard, leader of the board's corporate compliance group. But he insisted that the closure orders are part of a fair and firm enforcement process. "The message that could be conveyed," he adds, "is that the board means business."

BEST-SELLERS

FICTION

1. **Alias Grace,** *Margaret Atwood (1)*
2. **The Deep End of the Ocean,** *Jacquelyn Mitchard*
3. **Fall on Your Knees,** *Ann-Marie MacDonald (2)*
4. **The Englishman's Boy,** *Guy Vanderhaeghe (3)*
5. **You Went Away,** *Timothy Findley (4)*
6. **The Celestine Prophecy,** *James Redfield (5)*
7. **To the Hilt,** *Dick Francis (7)*
8. **The Laws of Our Fathers,** *Scott Turow*
9. **A Fine Balance,** *Rohinton Mistry*
10. **Selected Stories,** *Mavis Gallant*

NONFICTION

1. **Boom, Bust & Echo,** *David Foot and Daniel Stoffman (1)*
2. **Against the Current,** *Pierre Elliott Trudeau (4)*
3. **Barbara Frum,** *Linda Frum (3)*
4. **Shakedown,** *Angus Reid (7)*
5. **Natural Worlds,** *Robert Bateman*
6. **The Charity Game,** *Walter Stewart (10)*
7. **Double Vision,** *Edward Greenspon and Anthony Wilson-Smith*
8. **Emotional Intelligence,** *Daniel Goleman*
9. **The Dilbert Principle,** *Scott Adams (8)*
10. **Make the Connection,** *Bob Greene and Oprah Winfrey (2)*

() Position last week. Compiled by Brian Bethune

Volunteer soldiers



In *The Gallant Cause* Victoria author Mark Zuehlke recounts some never-before-told stories about the hundreds of young Canadian volunteers who fought against fascism in the Spanish Civil War from 1936 to 1939, despite the Canadian government's opposition to their undertaking.



My Phi, Nicolas, Cécilia: posters

A petition to Vietnam

Being a spokeswoman and poster girl for a public campaign is hard work. But for 15-year-old Cécilia Tran of Quebec City, it is in a good cause: asking Vietnam to free her father. Tran Trieu Quan, 44, who emigrated from Vietnam in 1970 and holds a Canadian passport, has been in a Vietnamese jail since August 1994, when he flew there to investigate a business deal that went wrong and the Vietnamese imprisoned him without charge. This spring, Quan was tried and convicted of "misappropriating socialist property" and sentenced to life in prison. An appeals court later reduced that sentence to 20 years. Officials with the department of foreign affairs in Ottawa say there is little Canada can do because Vietnam does not recognize dual citizenship and is treating Quan as Vietnamese. But a coalition of Quan's family, including his wife, Nguyen My Phi, other daughter Johette, and son, Nicolas, as well as friends and business associates, could not let the matter rest. They decided to keep up the pressure by launching a petition, with Cecilia as spokeswoman. Since then, her face has appeared on posters in schools and businesses across Quebec City, as well as in several large free ads in *Le Soleil* daily newspaper. The petition, which so far has more than 100,000 signatures, will be sent to Vietnam in December. Says the teenager: "I just hope it helps bring him home soon."

Passages

DIED: Actor **Mervin Good Eagle**, 19, who played the part of Joey Small Boat on the popular CBC television series *North of 60*, from suicide by hanging in Sandy Bay, Sask., near the home of his fiancée, Mildred Bear. The actor, who was born Mervin Black Kettle, played a gentle, caring teen in the series set in the fictional community of Lynx River, which is shot on location near Bragg Creek in western Alberta. Friends said they knew that Good Eagle had problems, but that he had not discussed them.



DIED: Comedian **Morey Amsterdam**, 87, of a heart attack, in Los Angeles. Although best known for his role as comedy writer Alan Brady on *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, which CBS broadcast from 1961 to 1966, Amsterdam had a career that spanned 70 years, from vaudeville and the early days of radio to a recent cabaret tour.

DIED: French film director **Marcel Carné**, 90, whose 1945 classic *The Children of Paradise* was filmed during the Nazi occupation of France in Paris.

DIED: Retailer **Jack Reitman**, 86, chairman of the women's clothing chain Reitmans (Canada) Ltd., which has more than 700 stores under different names across Canada, in Montreal.

DIED: Former Ontario Conservative cabinet minister **Reuben Baetz**, 73, of brain cancer, at his home in Sarasota, Fla. Before entering politics, Baetz headed the Canadian Council on Social Development.

SENTENCED: One-legged runner **Steve Fonyo**, 31, of Vancouver, who ran across Canada in 1984 and 1985 to raise $13 million for cancer research, to an 18-month conditional sentence for offences from assault to fraud, which occurred in Edmonton in 1994 and 1995.

AWARDED: The $44,000 Booker Prize, Britain's most celebrated literary award, to British writer **Graham Swift**, 47, for his novel *Last Orders*. Swift had been the bookies' front-runner, although Canadians **Margaret Atwood** and **Rohinton Mistry**, also among the six nominees, were many critics' top choices.

Tensions mount as the urban native population soars

Prairie time bomb



Hot food at Souls Harbour; Klein and Mercredi (below), united against Ottawa's cuts



On a bleak and windy fall day, some of the regulars escaped the biting cold by gathering early at Souls Harbour Mission House in downtown Regina. By midafternoon they were warming themselves over cups of coffee, waiting for the 5 o'clock serving of a hot stew dinner. Since its founding in 1991, Souls Harbour has been a haven of food and Christian fellowship for the poor, lonely and dispossessed. At least three quarters of those who come through the door are Indians or Metis—and they share more than their ancestry. All are poor, some are fighting alcoholism or substance abuse. Many have migrated to Regina from one of Saskatchewan's 72 reserves, hoping to find a job and a future. Instead, all too often they encounter a life of relentless hardship that includes unemployment, poverty, violence and other social ills. "The average person has no idea what these people face," says Gerri Carroll, who founded the mission—and whose volunteer staff serves about 5,000 meals a month. "Many of them come to the city with nothing—and have nowhere to turn."

The weekday mission-house ritual may have seemed a world away from last week's meeting of Prairie, territorial and aboriginal leaders in Calgary. But the two disparate events were intimately linked. Underlying both was one primary issue: the growing—and potentially explosive—problem of poverty among aboriginals, particularly those who have left their reserves to live in urban areas. And while last week's meeting was ostensibly about money—specifically the demand by the participants that Ottawa continue to fund welfare support for the ever-increasing numbers of urban Indians in western Canadian cities—there is little doubt that the question of financial responsibility represents only the tip of the iceberg. John Conway, a University of Regina sociologist, says that the fallout from native poverty is all too obvious—and will only get worse in an era when governments are off-loading costs. "The symptoms of social and personality disorganization are huge," Conway notes. "They are manifested in crime, delinquency, school dropouts and abuse."

If the lot of aboriginal people does not change, the statistics point to a bleak future. An estimated 13 per cent of Saskatchewan's population of one million is aboriginal—and birth trends suggest that number will grow to 30 per cent by the year 2020. Half of the Indian population now lives off-reserve, most of them in Regina, Saskatoon and Prince Albert, whose populations are now about 15-percent native. But the unemployment rate among the province's urban natives is 30 per cent—compared with the overall provincial rate of 5.1 per cent. And urban natives make up fully 39 per cent of the province's 35,000-strong welfare caseload.

Crime is also a concern. While politicians and experts often are unwilling to comment publicly, many say privately that the frustration and sense of hopelessness bred by poverty are clearly fuelling Saskatchewan's consistently high urban crime rate. Regina, for example, had the highest overall crime rate in Canada in 1995—14,601 Criminal Code infractions for every 100,000 residents. Saskatoon, meanwhile, had the fastest rate of increase in violent crimes—11.2 per cent for 1995—at a time when violent crime in Canada was experiencing an overall decrease. Across the Prairies, meanwhile, natives account for only five per cent of the population—but make up 32 per cent of the region's federal inmate population. "The link is poverty," says Lloyd Barber, former Indian land claims commission for Canada and past president of the University of Regina. "If you extrapolate into the future, there is a pretty explosive point out there."

But in an age of deficit cutting, ensuring that even the basic needs of impoverished urban natives are met has become the latest political football kicked between Ottawa and the provinces. With the federal Liberal government of Jean Chretien in the process of carving almost $5 billion out of social spending, it is also refusing to continue paying social assistance for Indians who live off-reserve. Ottawa argues that its responsibility extends only to status Indians on reserves—a position that was unanimously rejected at last week's Calgary meeting. Emerging from their daylong, closed-door session, the premiers, territorial leaders and aboriginal spokesmen demanded that Ottawa stop dumping financial responsibility for aboriginal people on cash-strapped provinces. Alberta Premier Ralph Klein even warned that it would be "political folly" for the federal government to ignore the solidarity that emerged at the meeting. But such warnings were met with federal intransigence—Indian Affairs Minister Ron Irwin said that Ottawa would happily take full responsibility for all aboriginals—provided that an additional $5 billion be shaved from transfer payments to the provinces.

In the case of the poorer Prairie provinces, the financial crunch is being felt. Saskatchewan, for one, has seen its welfare burden for non-status Indians increase by about $20 million since Ottawa began its financial shift in 1993 under the short-lived Kim Campbell government. This year alone, the province has assumed responsibility for an additional 4,000 cases of social assistance for Indian people living off-reserve. The same holds true in Manitoba, where provincial officials say that welfare costs for off-reserve Indians are increasing by about $25 million a year. They also estimate that the province has been forced to assume up to $100 million in additional social spending on natives since 1992. Saskatchewan Premier Roy Romanow says there is an "air of unreality" to the situation. "What do you do when the federal government says it will no longer pay?" Romanow asks. "You have to step in and help people."

For Ovide Mercredi, national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, much of the blame rests squarely with Chretien. The Prime Minister, he argues, is the architect of the strategy to pass responsibility for aboriginal people to the provinces—an idea first proposed in a White Paper that Chretien issued as Indian affairs minister in 1969. That notion was rejected by both native organizations and the provinces. But although the Trudeau government backed away from the proposal, Mercredi notes that it is still alive in the present government's approach. "Chrétien was the author of the termination of Indian rights in Canada," Mercredi says. "That was rejected—but now much of what they're doing is based on transferring responsibility for Indians to the provinces."

For some, the legal issue of who bears that responsibility is clear. Norman Zlotkin, a law professor at the University of Saskatchewan, says treaties signed between First Nations and the federal government outlined Ottawa's duty to deliver services such as education, health care and welfare. "There is certainly an argument to be made that any off-loading onto the provinces is a breach of treaty," Zlotkin says. Still, Zlotkin concedes that not all First Nations have treaties—which tends to cloud the issue of Ottawa's obligations. Others, meanwhile, maintain that the argument that Ottawa has a responsibility to all natives is incompatible with the notion of aboriginal self-government espoused by First Nations. "They chafe under the Indian Act, yet they also say the federal government has an obligation," notes Saskatoon lawyer Henry Kloppenburg, who was a legal assistant to former Supreme Court justice Emmett Hall at a time when the court dealt with important aboriginal rights issues. "The two do not add up."

Away from the legal arguments and political power plays, the grim reality continues for many urban natives. "When they get here there is still a lack of opportunity—and they often come ill-prepared," says Morris Eagles, who heads a welfare rights organization in Regina. The issue, he says, is not so much what level of government has the responsibility to deliver social services, but what can be done to improve economic and social conditions. That question is likely to assume even greater importance in the years ahead, given that about 25 per cent of all births in Saskatchewan are in the aboriginal community, the implications are obvious. Some experts say that solutions will be found. "I have the faith that human reason will come to grips with reality," says Conway. Barber also says that he views the future with optimism. "I think we are making progress," he notes. "The only question is, are we progressing fast enough?" But for people like Gerri Carroll, her work at Souls Harbour Mission provides a different perspective. "The point," she says, "is these people are hungry and need help." Seen from the streets, the answer to that question is clear—and negative.

DALE EISLER *in Regina*

Peace with a price

A voice from the past haunts Lucien Bouchard

For all of the Parti Québécois government's efforts to ensure a smooth ride at its long-awaited summit on Quebec's economic future, the road was definitely bumpy. Some things last week were beyond the government's control—especially former premier Jacques Parizeau's return to the political scene by writing a newspaper article critical of the Bouchard government. But the most striking image was that of social discord resulting from the government's own cost-cutting initiatives. As the summit of government, business and labor leaders opened at Montreal's Sheraton Centre on Oct. 29, several hundred protesters gathered outside to burn Quebec Premier Lucien Bouchard in effigy. Some of the demonstrators voiced an often-heard criticism—and one echoed in Parizeau's article—the PQ has abandoned social democracy and climbed into bed with business leaders. "It's simply to win votes for sovereignty—but they'll lose others," warned Laval teacher Louise Ducharme, who joined a union protest near the hotel. "It's too bad, but that's the way it is."

The perceived close relationship between the Bouchard government and business has threatened the once-close relationship between the PQ and the province's labor unions, traditional allies of the party. And it made the premier's task all the more delicate at the four-day summit, during which a series of committees made public reports on such issues as job creation strategies. With some union representatives threatening to walk out of the proceedings if the government did not introduce measures to soften the social effects of deficit-cutting, Bouchard was forced to counter the perception of his government's pro-business leanings. Laying claim once again to the PQ's mantle of social democracy, he reminded participants at a roundtable discussion about the government's plan to adopt pay equity legislation this year. That measure is vigorously opposed by business groups—but supported by Quebec's unions. "This is not a government that is insensitive, that cuts blindly," Bouchard declared.

That view was not shared by Parizeau, whose article in the daily *Le Devoir* appeared on Oct. 30—the first anniversary of last year's sovereignty referendum. In his article—much anticipated since Parizeau gave notice of its publication a week earlier—the former premier raised questions about the Bouchard government's perceived abandonment not only of sovereignty but also of social democracy. He cited as evidence its plan to bring Quebec's current $3.2-billion deficit to zero by the year 2000. "We risk entering into a known spiral: we cut, foreseen revenues fall, we cut again, they fall again," Parizeau wrote. "I think that in wanting to do too much we're affecting the health of the economy." PQ cabinet ministers brushed aside those remarks. "With all due respect, I think Mr. Parizeau is wrong," said Finance Minister Bernard Landry, who also served in Parizeau's cabinet. Landry also noted that the deficit-cutting target was the result of a consensus reached among the government, business and labor during Bouchard's first economic summit held last March.

But Parizeau's comments may well find some resonance within the PQ, where he is viewed as an unwavering separatist—and where some members are clearly irritated by Bouchard's decision to shelve the idea of another sovereignty referendum for up to three years. Parizeau's comments came just weeks before the party's mid-November policy convention—and may inflame the ensuing debate over the issues of social democracy, sovereignty and Quebec's language laws. Some hard-core party members have made no secret of the fact that they want the province's controversial Bill 86, which allows for bilingual commercial signs, abolished in favor of French-only signs. And former federal Bloc Québécois MP Jean Lapierre, now a popular Montreal radio talk-show host, believes that Bouchard will be attacked on all fronts. "I think Parizeau could be destabilizing for the government because it has to pass the test of the convention," he said. Lapierre, who is close to Bouchard, also said that Parizeau is frustrated by his departure from public life—and may continue to seek a higher public profile. "He's looking for a role for himself," Lapierre added. "So he will become the protector of the orthodoxy."



RYAN L. WALKER/CANAPRESS



ERIN STEPHEN MOORE

Parizeau; burning Bouchard in effigy (right); an economic summit with consensus and catcalls

Parizeau's re-emergence left some commentators pointing to his past. It was not the first time that Parizeau has criticized a PQ premier. In 1987, emerging from a previous retirement, he led a movement to oust Pierre-Marc Johnson, who had called for temporarily shelving the sovereignist option in favor of renewed federalism. But Laval University political science professor Louis Balthazar, for one, doubts if this time around Parizeau will have much impact. "I don't think we can expect any major upheaval in the PQ," Balthazar said. While "a lot of people agree with Parizeau within the PQ," he said, the party remains solidly in power—which in itself mitigates against a strong anti-Bouchard movement. Meanwhile, Balthazar also noted that Parizeau himself has a credibility problem: the man now attacking the Bouchard government for its austerity measures carried out a major public sector wage rollback in 1982 while finance minister in the Lévesque government.

But Parizeau's return to the public spotlight reopened some old wounds—particularly within Quebec's anglophone community. After the last sovereignty referendum, Parizeau blamed the Yes side's narrow loss on "money and the ethnic vote." Comments in his article last week had a similar flavor. "The only thing that must be avoided is the belief that the improvement of relations with Montreal's anglophone community is a sort of necessary condition to job creation and capital investment," he wrote. "Today, Quebec's economic development is no longer conditioned by the reactions of a few hundred people located on the Golden Square Mile or in Westmount."

Bouchard, meanwhile, was clearly shaken by the appearance of Parizeau's article. At one point, when asked about the former premier's remarks, Bouchard curtly told reporters: "I won't comment on what *this man* said." By contrast, he appeared to make overtures to anglophones attending the summit, saying pointedly in his opening speech: "A year ago tonight, our gathering would have been unthinkable." But the premier offered little in the way of allaying fears about a future Quebec drive towards sovereignty. Last week, a task force group headed by Imasco president Brian Levitt on the potential revitalization of Montreal's staggering economy delivered its report at the summit. Based on interviews with 36 Montreal business leaders, it concluded that "until the burden of political uncertainty has been lifted, one cannot reasonably expect Montreal to create the number of jobs that it so badly needs." But Bouchard indicated that sovereignty remained very much on the PQ's agenda, telling business leaders that "it is something that goes beyond the summit and the national assembly—the authority is with the Quebec people."

In the end, though, in spite of the protests and the criticism, a smiling Bouchard could point to some summit successes. The participants reached consensus on an agreement to create 72,000 jobs over three years. In fact, there seemed to be a little something for everyone. Labor walked away with the promise of a $250-million "solidarity fund" to help disadvantaged Quebecers find work—with the cost to be shared by government and employers. "It was a summit that creates hope," declared Clément Godbout, president of the Quebec Federation of Labor.

Business leaders, meanwhile, got a promise that payroll taxes would be reduced—and the government would revise bureaucratic red tape, which business leaders say hampers economic growth. "We know each other a little better now," said Jean Coutu, who presides over a major Quebec-based drugstore chain. "I think Bouchard has convinced the business people of Quebec and the people of Canada that, even with the option of sovereignty, Quebec is a good place to invest." As for the premier, Bouchard said that the summit had been "a big risk—but one that we had to take." It had, he added, ended with a little "magic." That assessment may have been a touch optimistic. But after a week of curses, the premier could perhaps be forgiven for being a little spellbound.

BRENDA BRANSWELL *in Montreal*

The credibility gap

Glen Clark lashes back at his critics


Clark: apologizing would be 'unwarranted'

"There is good news and bad news, Mr Premier"
"Give me the bad news"
"Seventy-five per cent of the people think you're lying"
"And the good news?"
"Ninety-three per cent of them don't care."

That is likely not exactly how Premier Glen Clark's staff broke the news to him. But according to one poll released last week, it may be a pretty fair assessment of where the British Columbia New Democrat finds himself, less than six months after his party narrowly won a second mandate in a provincial election last spring. Open skepticism about Clark's credibility now extends even to former cabinet colleagues. Last month former B.C. highways minister Jackie Pement, who sat with Clark in the cabinet of Clark's NDP predecessor, Mike Harcourt, tore up her NDP membership in protest against what she called the premier's "dishonesty and outright breach of trust."

This is British Columbia, of course, where such things are relative and the modern standard for scandal was set by Bill Vander Zalm, driven from office in disgrace in 1991 because of the conflict-of-interest uproar over the sale of Fantasy Gardens, his religious theme park. By that measure, the transgressions of Clark and his government are minor. Still, that the rookie premier is on the defensive over his government's honesty could hardly be any clearer. In an extraordinary move so soon after an election, Clark had his staff buy time on province-wide television on Oct. 29, and schedule more than two dozen interviews over the following days to counter what he called "a scurrilous campaign and schoolyard rhetoric" levelled against his government. Clark's media blitz, however, failed to offer a convincing explanation of how his election claim that his party balanced two successive provincial budgets began to unravel less than a month after the votes were counted. And with difficult issues looming on several fronts in the weeks ahead, that could soon prove to be a costly failure.

What many had expected to hear from Clark's 30-minute prime-time TV address was an apology. During last spring's election campaign, Clark boasted repeatedly that the New Democrats had balanced the 1995-1996 B.C. budget and would do so again in a 1996-1997 budget tabled just hours before the election writs were dropped. A month after his party won re-election on May 28 with 39 of 75 seats in the legislature, however, government documents revealed that the 1995-1996 budget was more than $200 million in the red. Subsequent disclosures showed that Clark also ignored advice from his own Treasury Board officials that his election budget was built on inflated estimates of tax revenue—and that the 1996-1997 budget deficit could exceed $1 billion.

Those revelations have angered many British Columbians. "People feel betrayed," says Liz James, a North Vancouver businesswoman who launched a petition to have B.C. Lt.-Gov. Garde Gardom dissolve the legislature and call a new election. Said Liberal Opposition Leader Gordon Campbell, whose party outpolled Clark's in May but wound up with only 33 seats in the house (two others are held by Reform, one by an independent): "This isn't the first time that he's misled people. This is just the first time he's been caught so red-handed cooking the books."

But Clark was adamant last week that he had nothing to apologize for. "I think apologizing would have been admitting we did something wrong," he said in an interview after his televised speech. "I think it's not warranted." Clark insisted that the budgets were based on widely accepted predictions by outside agencies for the performance of the B.C. economy.

Largely avoiding that issue, however, his televised remarks dwelt more heavily on election promises that the government has kept. They include a tax cut for some families, freezes on auto insurance rates, hydro charges and university tuitions, and a new

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monthly income subsidy for low-income employed families. "We made a whole series of very specific commitments during the campaign," Clark argued. "We've lived up to every single one of them"—with the exception, so far at least, of balancing the budget. To that end, his speech announced several new measures to restrain spending, among them a plan to slash 3,500 positions from the 40,000-member provincial public service and advance warning that British Columbia's municipalities can expect a cut in the $300 million that they receive annually from Victoria.

Whether Clark's performance—described by many as "wooden"—changed many minds is, at best, doubtful. Performing a public flip-flop over the deficit is only one of the ill-starred decisions that have cast a deepening shadow over the NDP's credibility since last May. Another took place in September—nominally at arm's length from cabinet—in the boardroom of Forest Renewal British Columbia. Created by Harcourt's government two years ago, the agency collects money from fees levied on felled trees and uses it to pay for reforestation and jobs for people left unemployed by a plethora of new NDP restrictions on logging. At the time, Minister of Forests Dan Miller promised, "There won't be a politician next week, next month, next year or 20 years from now who will dare put their hands into that pocket of money." Now, Miller has been obliged to defend the government's willingness to do just that by proposing to change legislation to allow the transfer of a temporary cash surplus of up to $400 million from the forest renewal fund to the province's general revenues. The diversion especially galls British Columbia's forestry companies—still giant players in the provincial economy—which have seen last year's substantial profits dissolve, in many cases into losses this year.

Clark's TV address only served to reinforce the impression of elastic ethics. For one thing, the cost—widely reported to have totalled between $120,000 and $150,000—of hiring a consultant to prepare the speech and of buying time on commercial television giant BCTV, is to be borne by B.C. taxpayers rather than by New Democrats, notwithstanding the event's plainly partisan purpose. And one measure of the distance that Clark has to make up to regain voters' confidence was the poll undertaken jointly by *The Province* newspaper and broadcaster UTV on Oct. 24. Released last week, it found support for Campbell's Liberals running at 50 per cent—twice the level expressed for Clark's NDP. At the same time, 75 per cent of those surveyed said they did not believe Clark's explanation for his election budget claims that they were based on widely accepted forecasts of British Columbia's economic growth in 1996.

Neither statistic suggests that Clark's political fate is sealed. Far from it. Campbell has enjoyed a 2-1 lead over the NDP before—as recently as a year ago—without being able to translate it into election victory. The 4½ years remaining in Clark's mandate, moreover, are an eternity in politics, where an unguarded remark can make or unmake fortunes in a matter of seconds. As well, the *Province*/UTV poll turned up another intriguing indicator. Asked to name the most important issue facing government, most respondents identified unemployment. Barely seven per cent of British Columbians said they were concerned about their political leaders' honesty and integrity.

But even if Clark has political time to spare, he will have no trouble filling the days ahead. His plans to shed government jobs and restructure the province's health and education systems along as yet undisclosed lines have already raised hackles among public sector unions. At the same time, the intention announced last week to cut an unspecified amount from annual provincial transfers to municipalities—hard on the heels of an earlier reduction of more than $200 million—is likely to worsen an already testy relationship. In a startling breach of tradition and protocol, representatives to the annual meeting of the Union of B.C. Municipalities erupted into booing when Clark appeared before the group in September.

Meanwhile, whatever confidence Harcourt's version of NDP management earned with the province's business community is eroding. The Vancouver Board of Trade is one of several significant business groups to complain that neither Clark nor his senior economic minister, Moe Sihota, has bothered to meet with them since the election. Then there is the much-debated deficit. Clark continued last week to rely on predictions that the B.C. economy will rebound next year, after two years of decline, from four-per-cent growth in 1994 to an estimated one-per-cent expansion this year. But others question that optimistic outlook. Darcy Rezac, managing director of the Vancouver Board of Trade, accused Clark of endorsing "Bart Simpson economics: underachievers and proud of it." According to Rezac, a $6-billion increase in the amount of tax that British Columbians pay to their provincial government since the NDP took power in 1991 has helped make the province unattractive to investors—and priced its products out of many markets.

Other currents are working in favor of Clark's main rival. Reform Party of British Columbia Leader Jack Weisgerber's mid-September decision to retire casts doubt on that party's future and the future allegiance of its supporters—roughly 16 per cent of voters, according to recent polls. Liberal Leader Campbell is well positioned to pick up that support—and consolidate his party's position as the sole right-wing alternative to the New Democrats in the next provincial election. As for Clark, with the man he defeated only last May now leading him in the polls, and a long season of hard decisions and deal-making—or breaking—ahead, he will need all the political capital, and credibility, he can call on.

CHRIS WOOD



The Liberals' Campbell: riding high in the polls

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'Sweet as chocolate'

A beauty queen faces a media storm after she is charged with assault



House: 'There's so much the public does not know'

Shortly before Danielle House graduated from Grade 12 at the only school in the tranquil fishing village of Daniel's Harbour, Nfld., her classmates voted her the person most likely to become a celebrity. Last week, their prediction came true. After being charged with assaulting a young woman in a St. John's bar, the tall, slim 20-year-old House—who was crowned Miss Canada International on Aug. 27—found herself in the eye of a media storm. Tabloid reporters from across the continent, including representatives of the *National Enquirer* and television's *Hard Copy* and *A Current Affair*, besieged her with interview requests, all of which she turned down. Jay Leno, meanwhile, made the former Miss Newfoundland and Labrador the butt of late-night jokes. "I never would have dreamt that something this awful would happen and then make me famous," House told *Maclean's*, her voice cracking with emotion. "It's sad, really."

The highly publicized barroom incident took place on Oct. 18. House, who is in the third year of a nursing program at Memorial University in St. John's, had gone to see a concert by a local band, The Irish Descendants, and then wandered over to the campus bar, the Breezeway. It was there, said House, that she bumped into her ex-boyfriend and his new girlfriend. Because of the pending court proceedings, House's lawyers have told her not to discuss details that led to the other woman allegedly being punched in the face, suffering facial injuries and a chipped tooth. All the same, House, who is slated to enter a plea on Nov. 5, says she is anxious to tell her side of the story. "It's so frustrating for me not to be able to defend myself," she adds. "I'm very eager to get the truth out. The media have made it sound like there were chairs and tables flying. It wasn't like that. There is so much the public does not know."

During a brief news conference in St. John's last week, a tearful House read from a prepared statement in which she said, "I have suffered the experiences of emotional and physical abuse prior to this incident and I wish to say that it had a direct impact in regards to this matter." She later told *Maclean's* that the alleged abuse at the hands of a former boyfriend had mainly to do with "mind games, harassment. He wouldn't let me move on with my life and would say things that made me feel terrible." House, who describes herself as "a very private person," adds that she never thought she would be making such a public confession. "It's hard to talk about, but I've decided I should go public," she says. "I want to let other girls know that anyone can get involved in a damaging relationship. I didn't really know what I was in at the time. But I received counselling after it ended and I'm getting counselling now."

House says that she has been so distraught over her arrest that she missed her midterm exams and plans to take the rest of the school term off. Her brush with unwelcome celebrity has also resulted in her disqualification from an international beauty pageant to be held in Jamaica on Nov. 23. According to pageant organizer Henry Antoine, the contest is not open to anyone charged with a criminal offence or involved in a situation that has "brought her into public disrepute, scandal, contempt or ridicule." On the other hand, Sylvia Stark, director of the Miss Canada International Pageant, says she did not even consider dethroning the Newfoundland beauty. Instead, House will finish out her reign, touring the country and attending events such as this month's Grey Cup parade in Hamilton. Stark, who says she has received hundreds of letters, faxes and calls in support of House, adds that "anybody who has worked with her or who knows her understands how seriously she takes her position as a public figure and what a good person she is."

Much of the support for House is coming from fellow Newfoundlanders. On the only road leading into her home community, a village of 400 people on the island's rugged west coast, stands a sign that reads "Welcome to Daniel's Harbour: Home of Miss Canada International, Danielle House." Residents had spent weeks raising more than $3,000 through bingos, potluck dinners and dances to help send House to Jamaica for this month's pageant. Following the charges, a petition supporting House quickly garnered 800 signatures from people in Daniel's Harbour and neighboring communities. "We were all very disappointed," says Abe Payne, principal of Holy Cross All-Grade school in Daniel's Harbour. "We don't know exactly what happened but we support her, regardless. Danielle was a model student. Quiet, never rowdy, and an excellent public speaker. She was the valedictorian of her class."

Newfoundland open-line programs have also been inundated with calls praising House's character, many of them echoing her St. John's hairdresser. Corey Stuckless, who, in a phrase worthy of Forest Gump, says simply that, "Danielle is as sweet as a box of chocolates." That may be so. For the time being, however, life for House is anything but sweet.

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Anthony Wilson-Smith



Backstage Ottawa

A political vacuum

Among the many political gifts of the late Rene Levesque was his impeccable sense of timing: he knew, among other things, when it was time to start a party—and when it was time to leave one. Levesque, who founded the Parti Quebecois in the late 1960s, decided instantly to quit public life in 1985 when PQ pollster Michel Lepage told him that the party had only one member popular enough to be re-elected—and that member was planning to retire. Even then, Levesque had probably waited too long: in personal terms, the strains of office had worn him out and he died two years later at the age of 65.

Last week marked the ninth anniversary of Lévesque's death—and also, of course, the first anniversary of the 1995 referendum on sovereignty. Each occasion provided cause for reflection among both federalists and sovereigntists, neither of whom appears particularly cheery. Federalists in Quebec, led by the nearly invisible leader of the provincial Liberals, Daniel Johnson, are sullen, silent, or both. Among federal Liberals in Ottawa, the referendum continues to be treated as a near-death experience that everyone considers best ignored. Meanwhile, the unity group Confederation 2000, which includes such people as former Alberta premier Peter Lougheed, economist Judith Maxwell and Yves Fortier, Canada's former ambassador to the United Nations, wrote a letter last week to Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and the nine premiers outside Quebec deploring the lack of action on constitutional reform.

> The Chrétien Liberals ignore the sleeping giant of Quebec separatism at the nation's peril

Among sovereigntists, two questions prevail: when—or whether—there will be another Quebec referendum, and how long Premier Lucien Bouchard will be around to lead them. No one will have to tell Bouchard when it is time to go—and some people think he may even decide on his own to step down before the next election. Like Lévesque in his last years in office, Bouchard is isolated from the party he leads, works too hard and likes his job too little to stay in it indefinitely. He does not even have time, he has complained, to make personal telephone calls to friends.

The similarities between Bouchard's political career and that of Levesque are startling. Both are hypnotic public speakers who are much more reserved in private. Bouchard, like Levesque, is regarded with such esteem by ordinary Quebecers that he is usually referred to in conversations and on open-line shows simply by his first name. Both men have dabbled with federalism, found it wanting, but seem unable to completely renounce all ties with the rest of Canada. Both men are also far more sympathetic to Quebec's anglophone and allophone communities than most Péquistes. Bouchard is a truck-driver's son who quotes Molière and gets away with gestures that would seem pompous coming from anyone else. Even before he learned English, he used to tell friends he was bilingual because he spoke French and Latin—and tested others by initiating conversations in Latin.

As head of the Bloc Quebecois, he once tried to enlist the caucus's support for gay rights legislation planned by the Liberals by lecturing his MPs on the widespread acceptance of homosexuality in ancient Greece. Journalist and author Richard Gwyn once wrote that, while Pierre Trudeau is the person most Quebecers collectively would like to be, Rene Lévesque is who they are. Bouchard combines elements of both men.

Outside Quebec, the province's economic woes and political divisions are regarded by some people with sneaking delight. Support for both sovereignty and the PQ has dropped in recent polls, and even sovereigntists say this is no time to talk about another referendum. But exhaustion and satisfaction are two quite different things. Quebecers may be as tired as anyone of the eternal debate, but are no happier about their present place in Canada. Bouchard can single-handedly arouse passions at any time. The federal Liberals can—and do—ignore all that. The result is Chrétien's enormous popularity in English Canada—and the nation's future peril.



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Canada NOTES

MONEY OVER FAMILY

About 20,000 fewer family-class immigrants will be allowed into Canada next year, said Immigration Minister Lucienne Robillard. However, the number of investor-class immigrants —those who agree to invest up to $350,000 in exchange for citizenship—will increase by about 18,000, maintaining total immigration at close to last year's 220,000 level. Robillard said Canadians are under the false impression that immigrants worsen unemployment.

JUST CHARGE IT

Federal Youth Minister Ethel Blondin-Andrew apologized for using government credit cards to buy a fur coat and go on vacations. She did it because she did not have a personal card, she said. According to ethics commissioner Howard Wilson, Blondin-Andrew routinely reimbursed the public treasury for her private expenses. "At no time did I use these credit cards in bad faith or for personal financial benefit," she said.

MEGALOPOLIS, ONT.

Ontario's municipal affairs minister, Al Leach, said he favors a plan to fuse seven local governments in the Metropolitan Toronto area to create a single governing body for a new megalopolis of 2.2 million people. "There certainly is a lot of duplication in the current system," Leach said. Most local politicians loudly rejected the idea.

SECRET ARMS CACHE

A Texan now in hiding and linked to an arms cache in northern British Columbia claimed he is not involved in the militia movement. Christopher Monroe Lackey told CBC TV that he bought the property near Smithers, B.C.—where the RCMP seized survival gear, explosives, handguns, rifles and a semiautomatic rifle—with the intention of retiring there. He said an "extremely violent" militiaman is responsible for the stockpiling.

MOVING ON WAR CRIMES

The federal government started deportation proceedings against two suspected war criminals accused of committing Nazis atrocities. Vladimir Katriuk, 75, of Montreal and Ladislaus Csatari, 82, who lives in Toronto, are on a list of 12 suspects the government wants to deport.

Constitutional rights of the fetus

A fetus's right to life, says Reform Leader Preston Manning, should be protected by amending the Constitution so that most abortions would be banned. "You need a constitutional provision that provides protection to the unborn, not just a change in the Criminal Code," Manning told an appreciative audience in Chilliwack, B.C., part of what is often referred to as the B.C. Bible belt. The Reform leader also reaffirmed a long-standing party policy that would allow people to petition the government to hold a referendum on moral issues like abortion and the death penalty. Asked whether an abortion is acceptable when pregnancy results from rape or incest, Manning said "the only justification for taking one life is to save another. And I would apply that with respect to abortion. It's the only moral justification in my view for capital punishment." Manning, an evangelical Christian, noted that he was only expressing his personal opinion. Reform does not officially favor or oppose abortion. During the same speech, Manning also said that the family should be defined as "the union of a man and woman as sanctioned by the state," a definition certain to rankle homosexuals seeking spousal benefits already granted to heterosexual couples.



CHUCK STOODY/CANAPRESS

Manning: his personal opinions

Manning's assertions came on the heels of a leaked memo from the Prime Minister's Office that was faxed to Liberals across Canada urging them to tell voters that Reform employs the "rhetoric of the American extreme right." Reform House Leader Deborah Grey accused Prime Minister Jean Chrétien of telling a "bold-faced lie," a remark she later withdrew at the request of the Speaker. Grey predicted that what she called "a smear campaign" would backfire on the Liberals.

ENVIRONMENT

'A passing grade'

There is the federal animal kingdom—and then there is the rest. That, some critics said, appears to be the message of Ottawa's new endangered species legislation. The bill allows for fines of up to $500,000, or five-year prison terms, for those caught killing endangered species or tampering with their nests, dens or residences. But the legislation applies only to those species that live on federal lands or are "federally managed"—that is, under Ottawa's jurisdiction through the Fisheries Act or the Migratory Birds Convention Act. That accounts for about 40 per cent of Canada's 276 endangered species, while the rest would be left to provincial protection. Environmentalists welcomed the bill, but noted that it could have been tougher. "I would give them a passing grade—but certainly not honors," said Stewart Elgie, a lawyer who works with the Canadian Endangered Species Coalition.

Prescription for trouble

Ontario's doctors rejected a plan that would have forced some of their colleagues—mostly new physicians—to work in underserviced rural or northern regions. The agreement, reached between the Ontario Medical Association which represents 23,000 doctors, and the provincial government, was rejected by 76 per cent of OMA's voters in a provincewide plebiscite. In the wake of the vote, the association tried to salvage the pact. Its 250-member governing body adopted a motion accepting the financial terms of the original deal—which reduced the government's claw-back on doctors' fees from 10 per cent to 2.9 per cent, and reinstated government subsidies for malpractice insurance premiums—as long as the province agreed not to force doctors to practise in the underserviced regions. "We are calling on the government to make an early return to the negotiating table and help us solve the problem of underfunding," said Dr. Gerry Rowland, head of the OMA. "The real issue is that we do not have sufficient resources to treat patients in Ontario to the level they require." Groups representing 17,000 family physicians and specialists said they will stop taking new patients Nov. 8 unless the government agrees to work out a better agreement. Other family physicians said they would stop taking new patients immediately.

Bloodshed and terror



A Canadian envoy will try to stop a new war in Africa

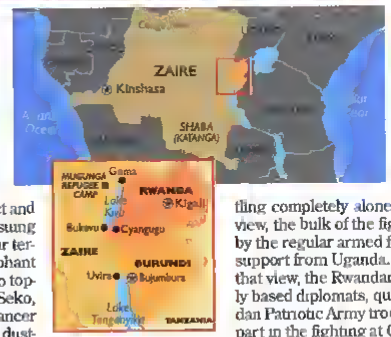
On both sides of the tortured border, they call the bridge Rusizi One. It spans the swift river of the same name in Central Africa's rolling highlands, providing a link—and a lifeline—between the Rwandan town of Cyangugu and Bukavu just across the frontier in Zaire. All week, the refugees trudged wearily across it into Rwanda, each with a tale of the horror unfolding on the other side of the Rusizi's fast-flowing waters. "I lost three of my children," moaned a tearful Abuwe Anyese Nakabooo, cradling a pop-eyed infant in her arms, as she struggled to explain how her children "disappeared" in the chaos of her headlong flight to the border. Standing nearby, Mutaware Binyonyo recounted 48 harrowing days spent as a prisoner of the Zairese army. "The soldiers beat us every day," he said, "telling us they were going to kill all the Tutsis." Not far away, a teenage girl stood beside her distraught mother, nodding agreement. "We had to leave," she murmured while running a hand over her nose and cheeks. "I have the features of a Tutsi."

In the highlands last week, that was as good as a death sentence. As has happened so often in the past, the Tutsis and their ancient enemies, the Hutus, were once again at war in the ancestral homelands both peoples share deep in the heart of Africa. Amid the area's sapphire lakes and smouldering volcanoes, hundreds of thousands of refugees were again on the march, raising the prospect of a humanitarian catastrophe even larger than the one that fell upon the region less than three years ago. For unlike what happened in the summer of 1994, when the Hutu-inspired slaughter of 500,000 Rwandan Tutsis eventually rendered millions homeless, the conflict this time threatens to engulf the entire Great Lakes region. Zaire and Rwanda are already engaged in an undeclared form of war, with Burundi and Uganda teetering on the brink of the same slippery slope. There is even the possibility that mineral-rich Zaire itself may disintegrate, a development of incalculable consequences for the entire continent, indeed the world. "It's an extraordinarily difficult situation," acknowledged Canadian Ambassador Raymond Chrétien, soon after accepting an appointment as UN special envoy to the region. Chrétien, nephew of Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and current ambassador to Washington, was posted to Zaire, Rwanda and Burundi from 1978 to 1981 and has served in Belgium, the colonial overlord when Zaire was known as the Belgian Congo. "My first priority is very clear," said Chrétien. "We simply must attempt to arrange some kind of an immediate ceasefire in the Great Lakes."

That will be no easy task. By week's end, Tutsi forces had all but driven Zairese troops out of a swath of territory in the east of the country. After two weeks of fighting, the Tutsis—once known overseas as the Watusis—were in control of more than 400 km of Zaire's borders with Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda, an area stretching from beyond Lake Kivu in the north to Lake Tanganyika in the south. More importantly, they had either seized or closed down the only three airports in a region with no road or rail links to Kinshasa, the capital 1,600 km to the west. With the runways at Uvira, Bukavu and Goma sealed, Zairese authorities had no way of reinforcing or resupplying their hard-pressed troops in the east.



Refugees in Mugunga; Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy (left) with Raymond Chrétien: fear



And neither the victorious Tutsis nor the reeling government of Zaire appeared to be in any mood for compromise. In Kinshasa, Zairese Prime Minister Léon Kengo Wa Dondo rejected calls for urgent talks to end the fighting, accused Uganda and Burundi of involvement in the conflict and claimed Rwanda was intent on "pursuing an insane plan of annexing part of our territory." At the same time, a triumphant Tutsi leader in Uvira urged Zairese to topple ailing President Mobutu Sese Seko, undergoing treatment for prostate cancer in Switzerland. "Throw him into the dustbin of history," Laurent Kabila, chief co-ordinator of the newly formed Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire, told a cheering crowd. "Rise up against the repressive system that has plunged the people of this country into misery."

While the opponents spar, literally millions of refugees are caught in the middle. For the most part they are Hutus, the same hordes that fled Rwanda in 1994 when the Tutsi-dominated Rwanda Patriotic Front fought its way to power. Fearing reprisals for the mass slaughter of the Tutsis, the Rwandan Hutus and their compatriots from Burundi settled in squalid camps among the banana fields and lava flows of eastern Zaire. Last week, however, many were again on the run, fleeing the steady advance by well-armed, well-organized Tutsi guerrillas drawn largely from Zairese-born ethnic Tutsis, known locally as Banyamulenge. "At one point, we had refugees on the road walking in both directions," said Panos Moumtzis, a spokesman for the UN high commissioner for refugees in Goma on the Zairese shore of Lake Kivu. "They are really panicking. They are very scared. They do not know where to go."

By week's end, there were more than 400,000 refugees crammed into one refugee camp at Mugunga, north of Goma. Conditions at the camp, the largest single concentration of refugees in the world, were "in a word, bad," said Roberta Walker of the Canadian Red Cross, which had five Canadians on the relief staff in Goma. "Everything is coming apart at the seams." What is more, conditions were likely to get worse as the five Canadians, along with another 100 expatriate relief agency workers in Goma, were forced to flee across the border into Rwanda when fierce fighting engulfed the town. Aid officials feared an imminent disaster on the 1994 scale, when 50,000 refugees died as a result of the stinking, overcrowded conditions in the camps.

Precisely who is responsible for the latest tragedy remains an open question. The current fighting erupted in September when local Zairese officials embarked on a campaign to strip the Banyamulengi of their lands in Zaire and their citizenship. The Zairese Tutsis, whose ancestors settled in the hills west of the Great Lakes more than 200 years ago, fought back. As their success on the battlefield last week demonstrated, they have proved more than capable of handling Zaire's regular armed forces, long notorious throughout Africa for their indiscipline. Faced with a determined foe, Zaire's troops disintegrated. "An army in retreat is always at its most dangerous and the Zairese army in retreat is little more than a band of looting brigands," remarked one South African observer on the scene last week.

The Banyamulengi have not been battling completely alone, however. According to the official Zairese view, the bulk of the fighting around the lakes has been carried out by the regular armed forces of Rwanda and Burundi with generous support from Uganda. While there is no direct evidence to support that view, the Rwandans have admitted to playing some role. Locally based diplomats, quoting eyewitnesses, claim that regular Rwandan Patriotic Army troops travelled by boat across Lake Kivu to take part in the fighting at Goma. And the regional commander in Cyangugu, who would only identify himself as Lt.-Col. Kayizare, told *Maclean's* that he had sent troops across the border in the Bukavu area to silence Zairese artillery that had been shelling the town. "We retaliated by two means," he said. "Firstly, we fired on them with machine-guns and mortars and then we sent in a force to destabilize them and push them far from where they could continue to harass our people."

For the moment, at least, the Tutsis who live around Africa's Great Lakes have won the day. In human terms, however, the cost has been enormous. And the accounting is far from complete.

BARRY CAME *with HAMILTON WENDE in Cyangugu*



Renée Appel in her Toronto home: a moral accounting

PAUL REED-MCLEARY'S

WORLD | SWITZERLAND

Nazis, gold—and justice

BY NOMI MORRIS

Before the Nazi Holocaust, Abraham Hammersfeld was a successful Viennese businessman who supplied linens to hotels across Austria. His grandchildren Hans and Renee, who now live in Toronto, remember him as a religious man, attentive and concerned about his family's future. Hans, Renée's cousin, was 11 in 1941 when he saw his grandfather for the last time. That was just outside Riga, Latvia, where part of the family fled after they were driven from their homes by anti-Jewish laws. Much later, Abraham's descendants learned that their grandfather and his wife were among a group of Baltic Jews who were shot in front of a mass grave that they had to dig themselves. Renée, who survived countless horrors including a year in the Auschwitz death camp, recalls that before the German annexation of Austria in 1938, her worried grandfather took her aside to say he had put some money away in Switzerland.

"I don't know if it was $5,000 or $50,000," says Renée, who met and married Royal Canadian Air Force serviceman Charles Appel at the end of the war. "I was busy surviving and wasn't interested in the details." Now Appel and her cousin, Hans Hamersfeld (the second m fell out when he immigrated to Canada), are among nearly 1,000 survivors and relatives of Holocaust victims who have submitted claims to Switzerland's banking ombudsman for assets that the ultra-secret and bureaucratic Swiss banking establishment had steadfastly refused to acknowledge until late 1995. Mounting international pressure—spearheaded by the World Jewish Congress and the U.S. government—has plunged a quiet country of seven million people into a moral accounting of its banking secrecy laws, its wartime record, and the principle of neutrality on which its national identity is based.

Swiss banks confront their past

The scandal goes beyond the tens of millions—some say billions—of dollars in unclaimed accounts, which according to Swiss law revert to the banks rather than state coffers, as in the United States and Canada. Recently declassified U.S. and British intelligence reports have also revealed that Swiss banks profited from gold that the Nazis looted from Jewish victims and the treasuries of occupied countries. Switzerland has been forced to admit to a secret agreement with Nazi Germany to turn back Jewish refugees at the border, which affected at least 10,000 of the wartime desperate. And last month, the Swiss foreign ministry first denied, then acknowledged, secret Cold War deals with Poland and other East Bloc countries to use money from unclaimed accounts—mostly Jewish—to compensate Swiss nationals who owned property in the east that was nationalized by communist regimes.

"I don't see why a country like Switzerland should grow rich on the tragedy of the Jewish people," says Appel, explaining why she and her cousin have each paid a $300 fee and rustled up 60-year-old family letters to support a claim that might in the end prove untraceable and yield nothing. Even with a new spirit of cooperation by Swiss authorities, the obstacles are legion. To escape detection by the Nazis who were seizing Jewish assets across Europe, many Jews opened numbered accounts or asked gentile friends to open accounts on their behalf. Some of those trust account holders may have taken the money for themselves after the war rather than search for the rightful heirs.

Appel and Hamersfeld, who survived the war in a brutal Siberian prison colony, recall that the family inquired through the Swiss consulate in Toronto about their grandfather's legacy. They were politely rebuffed. It is a story told again and again by survivors around the world who were asked by Swiss bankers to provide account numbers, proof of inheritance or a death certificate—the same stringent rules that are applied to the heirs of any deceased account holder. Says Appel: "I entered Auschwitz with my hair shorn, no clothes, and my hands held high. How could I have such papers?"

In the case of survivor Marianne Singer—who last saw her father, Fritz Neumann, at the Terezin concentration camp near Prague—the relatives had no account number but they did have a code word of the type used for numbered accounts. "All through my childhood I'd hear frustrated comments about how there was no way to go about looking, since Swiss secrecy laws required the account number, dates and other details," says Neumann's grandson, John Singer, who lives in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. and is working on his mother's claim. Grandfather Neumann owned a cut-crystal factory that exported to 30 countries from Jihlava, the Czech town that was also the home town of renowned

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composer Gustav Mahler Singer suspects his grandfather had substantial holdings, but says justice, not money, is the reason for pursuing the claim. His grandfather perished at Auschwitz and his mother went through five different camps before she was liberated at Bergen-Belsen, weighing 60 lb. "If they paid us 10, 20, or 100 million dollars it wouldn't begin to redress the pain," Singer says. "But I feel a moral responsibility to leave no stone unturned. I would be betraying my grandfather's memory if I didn't look, even if there is no longer anything there."

Toronto lawyer Sergio Karas, who represents Singer and the Hammersfeld clan, says his dealings with a Swiss lawyer have convinced him that both families have "credible claims." Karas has helped 10 clients—including one in Vancouver and one in Montreal—submit their applications. He says the Swiss are considering three logical options to resolve the dormant account dilemma: return money with interest to its rightful owners where bank officials can trace a "match," provide compensation where they cannot find the money, and provide a lump sum to Jewish organizations or charities for the rest. The real issue, says Karas, is that a cloak of bank secrecy and political neutrality allowed the Swiss to avoid confronting their past for decades.

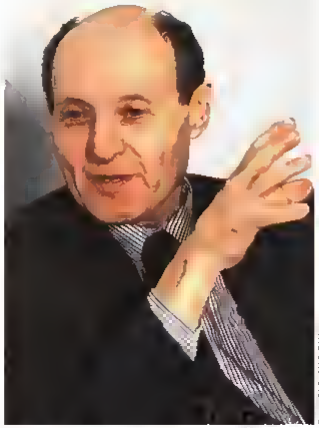


PHOTO: SNELL MACLEAN'S

Hans Hamersfeld, forced to leave Vienna

The Swiss did in 1946 transfer some Nazi gold to the Allies, who sought to use it to help rebuild Europe. The Swiss also paid out an amount worth $77 million today to those persecuted by the Nazis, under a Washington agreement that unfroze Swiss assets in the United States and German assets in Switzerland. Then, in 1962, the Swiss banks were forced by law to compile a list of unclaimed funds of foreigners and war refugees, which amounted to $23 million at today's value. By 1974, after processing 7,000 claims, most of that money had been paid to heirs and the rest to Jewish and Swiss refugee aid organizations.

Last year's 50th anniversary of the end of the Second World War was one of several recent events that sparked a renewed interest in Swiss wartime dealings. Officials of the World Jewish Congress began to pore over declassified American and British documents, an effort that led to a $27-billion suit against Swiss banks by Jewish heirs in the United States. The British Foreign Office also launched an investigation, prompted by questions in Parliament. Among the discoveries was that the Swiss had misled Washington about how much Nazi gold they had at the end of the war. Other researchers charged that the Nazis sold leather from Jewish factories to the Swiss shoe concern Bally. And a series of papers pointed to collaboration between Swiss bankers and businessmen and the Nazis to move gold and looted property in and out of Switzerland. Among the plunder was stolen artwork, jewelry, Jewish ritual objects and even gold from the teeth of gassed Jews, which was allegedly sold to the Swiss National Bank.

Veteran Swiss parliamentarian Jean Ziegler, who represents a Geneva riding,



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says such revelations have become "an earthquake, a deep trauma" in the Swiss national consciousness. Ziegler is among those who believe it is time for Switzerland to revise its benign *Sound of Music* historical self-image. "In the past, Switzerland strangled its memory and denied its crimes. Now, with the revelations from abroad, we can no longer deny them," he says. "We are like a criminal who has been caught." Ziegler, who earlier this year published a book critical of the Swiss banking industry, calls Swiss neutrality "a lie, plain and simple." The younger generation in particular he says, must come to terms with the role played by their parents and grandparents in the Second World War. "They became accomplices by accepting the gold taken from the dead at Auschwitz. The immense prosperity of the Swiss banks is founded on profits made with the Nazis," Ziegler says. "Since the Second World War Swiss neutrality means making the most money possible with everybody."

Stung by such vociferous attacks, the Swiss Banking Association last year pledged to conduct a new review of dormant Jewish bank accounts, and came up with an estimate of $43 million from 775 accounts in 36 banks. But the group opened itself to criticism by failing to consider non-cash assets—such as jewelry and gold bars—and deposits in insurance firms and trust companies. By last spring, the government had hired a U.S. public relations firm to protect Switzerland's image, linked to the credibility of its banks, and had authorized the ombudsman to oversee the processing of claims against Switzerland's 400 banks.

It was not enough. In April, U.S. Senator Alfonse D'Amato opened high-profile Senate committee hearings to find out whether Swiss banks were withholding funds from Holocaust victims. Soon after, the Swiss finally initiated legislation to relax 1934 bank secrecy laws so that an independent panel of three Swiss executives and three representatives of Jewish organizations can probe the vaults. Historians were appointed to study the role of the Swiss banks and the Swiss government in co-operating with Nazi Germany during the war. But the revelations kept coming. In mid-October, D'Amato's committee broke the news of the secret compensation deal between Switzerland and Poland to use unclaimed funds in settling Swiss claims over nationalized assets. Now the Swiss government has appointed even more historians to probe that and similar deals with Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. And the post-communist governments of several of those countries have announced their own probes.

In fact, the 1989-1990 fall of Soviet Bloc communism was a major trigger for the current pan-European re-examination of the Holocaust. In the Czech Republic and eastern Germany, authorities have received tens of thousands of claims from people whose property was seized either by Nazis or communists, and have settled many. Cities such as Moscow and Berlin have opened previously secret archives, providing new information for historians to sift through. Negotiations are under way for the exchange of valuable art treasures—including rare books and original musical scores—that were spirited from one country to another by conquering or retreating Soviet or German armies. Some of the art was part of state collections—and some was stolen by the Nazis from Jewish victims. That was the case with 8,000 items that went on the auction block in Vienna last week as a gesture of atonement by the Austrian government, which had ignored Jewish claims for decades. The sale raised $19.6 million for the care of Holocaust survivors.

Two other European authorities were grappling with new Holocaust-related scandals last week. In Paris, the city council halted a sale of publicly owned apartments amid allegations that several of them had been seized from French Jews who were deported by the wartime Vichy regime. And Portugal was buffeted by a magazine report claiming that it had received Nazi gold valued today at $1.35 billion, possibly through Swiss middlemen. Portugal evidently tried to use the gold to buy coal from Poland.

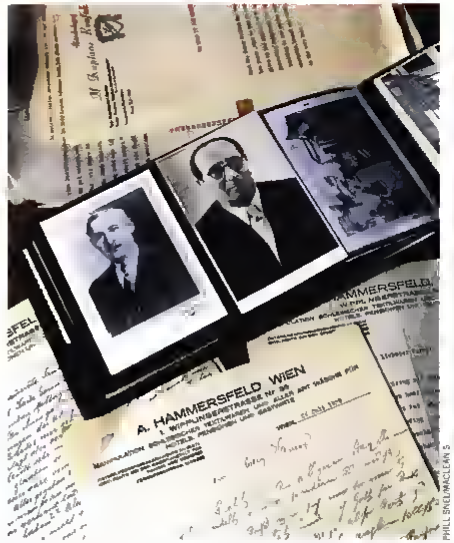
In Switzerland itself, banking ombudsman Hanspeter Häni announced he would reveal next week the progress made on Swiss bank account claims. He was responding to a sharp attack by the increasingly impatient World Jewish Congress. "After 2,000 inquiries and 1,000 formal claims, the Swiss ombudsman has returned not a cent," WJC vice-president Kalman Sultanik said in New York City. "This a cruel farce."

The Swiss, too, are re-examining the behavior of the secretive banking establishment—and their own forebears. Sébastien Guex, a historian at the University of Lausanne, says that contrary to popular belief, the 1934 bank secrecy law was not enacted as a humanitarian way of protecting Jewish assets from Nazi scrutiny. It was, he says, designed to provide a tax haven for the French. The anti-Nazi explanation was devised by spin doctors of the 1960s. Says Guex: "In 1933, after Hitler took power, the attitude of the Swiss authorities was not at all to protect the belongings of the Jews, but to protect Switzerland from the arrival, en masse, of Jewish refugees." The wartime record is also bearing heavily on the current Swiss debates about entering NATO and the European Union—as well as debates about the country's role as a site of money laundering for drug barons, terrorists and other criminals. "The Swiss bank debate goes to the issue of Swiss neutrality," says Toronto lawyer Karas. "It's a question of whether you really can live as an island within Europe. The Swiss think they live in Disneyland."

To his client John Singer, who is searching for his grandfather's legacy, the issue is even simpler. "You can't put a price on human life," he says. "But the Swiss should do what's right with those funds." Now, with five separate probes under way, it appears the Swiss are finally determined to do that.

With JO-ANNE VELIN in Geneva

Appel survived Auschwitz. 'How could I have papers?'



PHILIP SYKES/MACLEAN'S

Photos of Abraham Hammersfeld and son, with letters, claims

MURDER ON THE NET

A woman found dead in North Carolina knew she might be sexually tortured and killed when she went to visit a man she met through the Internet, police said. Sharon Lopakta, 35, left a note for her husband in Hempstead, Md., telling him, "If my body is never retrieved, don't worry, know that I'm at peace." Lurid electronic-mail messages found on her computer from a person nicknamed Slowhand indicated she knew what awaited her. Police laid a first-degree murder charge against Robert Glass, 45, owner of a mobile home next to a shallow grave where her strangled body was found.

A GULF WAR COVERUP?

The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency said it would investigate claims by two ex-employees that the agency covered up evidence that tens of thousands of American soldiers may have been exposed to chemical weapons during the Gulf War. Patrick and Robin Eddington, husband-and-wife analysts who resigned earlier this year, said their careers had been destroyed when they pursued their own inquiry into some 60 incidents of chemical exposure.

YELTSIN OPERATION NEARS

U.S. heart specialist Michael DeBakey predicted that Russian President Boris Yeltsin would go under the knife this week for his long-awaited heart bypass operation. DeBakey, who was due to arrive in Moscow on Sunday, said he expected Yeltsin to resume his full duties within two months.

RAO UNDER FIRE

Pressure mounted on former Indian prime minister P. V. Narasimha Rao to give up his last political post after he became the first Indian leader to face a criminal trial. Rao was indicted last week on charges involving vote-buying in 1993. He is also named in two other cases. Although he stepped down as Congress party leader, Rao still heads its parliamentary delegation.

EUROPE'S CUBA LAW

European Union foreign ministers agreed on a new law to counter the U.S. Helms-Burton Act, which allows lawsuits against foreign companies doing business with Cuba. The new measure would allow firms to countersue in European courts to recoup damages assessed in U.S. courts.



Bodies laid out in the São Paulo suburb, leaking fuel set streets, cars and homes ablaze

A DEADLY CRASH IN THE CITY: **All 96 people aboard a Fokker-100 passenger jet, and at least five on the ground, were killed when the plane plowed into a suburb of São Paulo, Brazil's largest city, shortly after takeoff. The Brazilian TAM airline jet, bound for Rio de Janeiro, suddenly lost altitude and skidded across the roofs of several homes before slamming into the front of a house and exploding in a ball of fire. Fuel leaking from the plane set streets, cars and homes ablaze in the middle-class neighborhood, near São Paulo's Congonhas domestic airport. Airline and government officials were investigating the cause.**

China's disappearing dissidents

The trial took less than four hours, but for Chinese dissident Wang Dan it will mean another 11 years in jail. Wang, 27, was one of the student leaders of the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests that led to a bloody crackdown by the Chinese military. He had already served 3 ½ years in prison for that episode when he went back into the dock last week. There he faced subversion charges mainly for writing critical articles about the government in foreign publications during the period between his release in 1993 and his re-arrest in May, 1995. His lawyer said Wang spoke for 40 minutes in his own defence, but to no avail.

Wang's conviction and imprisonment virtually cleared the Chinese landscape of active dissidents. Last December, China's leading opposition figure, Wei Jingsheng, was jailed for 14 years for supposed subversion. Others are either in prison or have fled overseas. Analysts believe the Chinese leadership is determined to clamp down on dissent while the transition of power from ailing patriarch Deng Xiaoping continues. Moreover, they say, Beijing believes that foreign governments, eager for trade, will mount only token protests. Canada and other countries denounced Wang's imprisonment, but Prime Minister Jean Chrétien said a few days earlier that boycotting China would cost Canada "a lot of business, a lot of jobs."

Few Germans celebrate as Kohl sets a record

After 14 years and one month in office, Chancellor Helmut Kohl became postwar Germany's longest ruling leader, surpassing the 5,145-day record of his mentor, Konrad Adenauer. But the "K-day" milestone was no cause for celebration among many of Kohl's countrymen. Although feted as the man who reunited Germany in 1990, Kohl faces rising criticism over high unemployment and a bloated budget. Six key economic institutes last week predicted that Bonn would not meet next year's fiscal targets for joining the single European currency. Kohl, who chose to pass K-day on a trade mission to Tokyo, insisted he would meet the goals.

Advertising supplement to the November 11, 1996 issue of Maclean's Magazine



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Be sure to leave time for some other popular activities. Sightseeing, river and ocean cruises, Deepsea and freshwater fishing, Parks, springs, rivers and lakes, Canoeing, rowing, boating, waterskiing, parasailing, and jet skiing. Exciting nightlife — wonderful restaurants. Museums, open-air art festivals, galleries and historical sites. Live theatre. Colorful shopping. Flea market. Farmer's market. The champion Daytona Cubs, minor-league affiliate of the Chicago Cubs. See one of the world's best collections of Corvettes, other vintage cars and motorcycles at Mark Martin's Klassix Auto Museum. Or, for a taste of gritty competition, take a few laps at one of the area's go-cart parks.

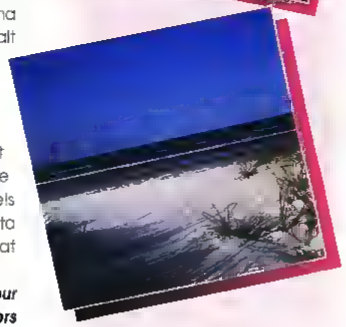
Getting to Daytona Beach is easy with daily flights into the new Daytona Beach International Airport. For those who drive, Interstate 4 and Interstate 95 converge in Daytona Beach, making excursions to Walt Disney World Resort, Epcot, Sea World, Universal Studios, Kennedy Space Center and other attractions simple.

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For more information and your free Daytona Beach Area Visitors Guide, call the Daytona Beach Area Convention & Visitors Bureau at 1-800-854-1234. Internet users can send to daytonabea@aol.com.









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For information contact East Central Florida Tourist Bureau, 115 Canal Street. New Smyrna Beach, Florida 32168 1-800 541-9621 Internet address http://www.travelfile.com/get/nwsmbch



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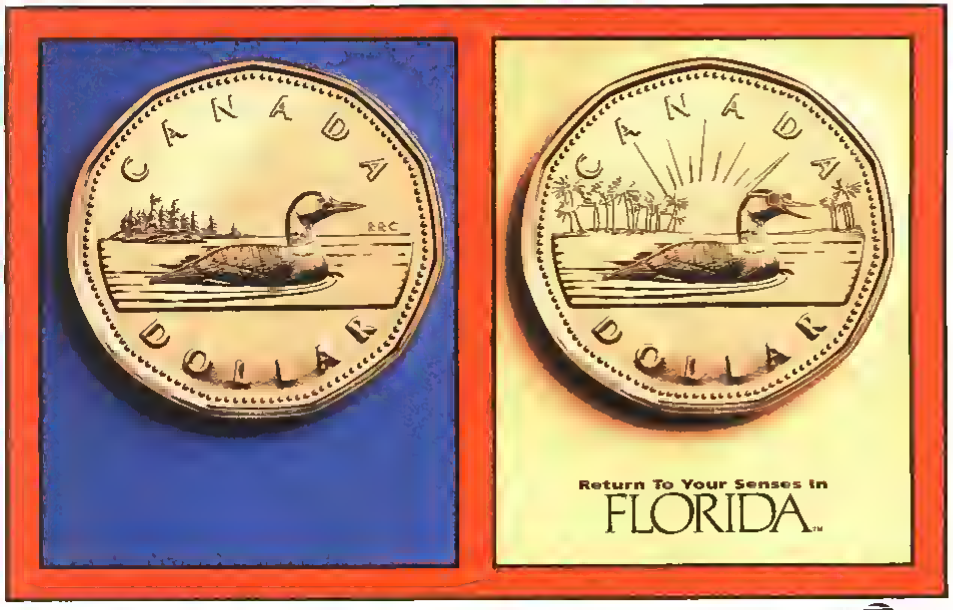
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How to Enter

1. To enter you must complete the Maclean's Florida Sweepstakes Official Entry Form printed in this magazine. Completed entries and questionnaires can be faxed in (416) 503-0534 or mailed to Maclean's Florida Sweepstakes Etobicoke "A" PO Box 651, Etobicoke, Ontario M9C 5M9.
2. Contest begins November 4, 1996 and ends midnight January 17, 1997.
3. To be eligible, Official Entry Forms must be received no later than midnight January 17, 1997.
4. You may only enter once. No purchase necessary.
5. This contest is subject to all federal, provincial and municipal laws. Quebec residents may submit any dispute regarding this contest to the Regie des alcools, des courses et des jeux.

You may obtain a complete set of the Official Contest Rules by forwarding your request in writing to: OFFICIAL CONTEST RULES Maclean's Florida Sweepstakes Etobicoke "A" PO Box 651, Etobicoke, Ontario M9C 5M9.

How to Win

1. On January 20, 1997 two eligible winners will be selected by random draw. The first entry selected will be eligible to win the Daytona Beach Holiday Package for two. The second entry selected will be eligible to win the Ft. Lauderdale Beach Holiday Package for two.
2. Starting January 20, 1997 attempts will be made to contact the selected entrants at the telephone number on their Official Entry Form between 9 am and 5 pm for a period of 5 working days. If an eligible entrant cannot be contacted within the allotted time, he/she is no longer eligible to win and another entrant will be drawn and the process of contacting the new entrant will be repeated.
3. In order to be declared a winner each selected entrant must complete and sign a Release & Indemnity Form and correctly answer unaided a time-limited mathematical skill testing question administered at a mutually convenient time over the telephone. There will be only one opportunity to answer the mathematical skill testing question. An ineligible winner who provides an incorrect answer will no longer be eligible to win a prize in this contest. The procedure outlined in points 1, 2 and 3 above will be followed until all prizes in this contest have been awarded.
4. The odds of winning depend on the number of eligible Official Entry Forms received. One prize per person, household, company or organization. ■

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 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4+ ☐
2. How many different parts of Florida have you visited in the past five years?
 Miami ☐ Daytona ☐ Ft. Lauderdale ☐
 Orlando ☐ New Smyrna ☐ Other ☐
3. When you go on vacation, do you usually take along children under the age of 18?
 Yes ☐ No ☐
4. When do you plan on travelling to Florida
 in the next 12 months ☐
 in the next 2 - 3 years ☐
 in the next 4 - 5 years ☐
 never ☐
5. How long in advance do you plan a Florida vacation?
 less than 2 weeks ☐
 between 2 and 4 weeks ☐
 between 1 and 2 months ☐
 between 3 and 5 months ☐
 6 months+ ☐
6. (a) Do you use a credit card when vacationing?
 Yes ☐ No ☐
 (b) If yes, which of the following major credit cards do you use?
 VISA ☐ MasterCard ☐ American Express ☐ Other ☐
7. Is Florida a good value? Rank the following
 Shopping: Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Satisfactory ☐ Poor ☐
 Restaurants: Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Satisfactory ☐ Poor ☐
 Attractions: Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Satisfactory ☐ Poor ☐
8. Do you consider Florida an economical vacation as compared to other sun destinations such as the Caribbean, Mexico or Hawaii?
 Yes ☐ No ☐
9. How much would you budget for a Florida vacation in U.S. dollars?
 Under $1,500 ☐ $1,500 - $3,000 ☐ $3,001+ ☐
10. Did a travel agent book any part of your last Florida vacation?
 Yes ☐ No ☐
11. What mode of transportation do you use when travelling to Florida?
 Air ☐ Car ☐ Other ☐
12. Which airline or tour operator did you use for your last Florida Vacation? Canadian Holidays ☐ other ☐
 If other please specify _____

Official Entry Form *Please print:*

☐ Male ☐ Female Age _____

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Signature _____

By signing, I hereby declare that I have read, understood and complied with the Contest Rules.

Fax this completed Questionnaire and Official Entry Form to (416) 503-0534 or mail to: Maclean's Florida Sweepstakes Etobicoke "A", PO Box 651, Etobicoke, Ontario M9C 5M9. You could win one of two great getaway trips.



Business

Housing heats up

Low loan rates are fuelling a fragile recovery

Ken Lane is fed up. Ever since he moved out of his parents' Halifax home 11 years ago, the 33-year-old communications consultant has enriched a succession of landlords by dutifully paying his monthly rent. But with mortgage rates now at their lowest levels in 30 years, Lane figures it is finally his turn to become a property owner. The thought actually crossed his mind six years ago, but rates then were twice what they are now, and Lane was worried about layoffs at Maritime Tel and Tel. His fears were confirmed in 1995 when his boss handed him a severance package. Today, he is working on contract at Canadian Forces Base Halifax and the future still seems hazy. No matter—he has decided to take the plunge. "Interest rates are the driving factor," says Lane, who last week was still shopping around. "It's certainly not job security."

Lane's entry into the world of home ownership should help to bring a smile to the bespectacled face of the nation's chief banker, Gordon Thiessen. For the past 18 months, the governor of the Bank of Canada has been steadily trimming interest rates in a determined effort to invigorate the country's lethargic economy—expected to grow by only 1.5 per cent this year. The central bank dropped its key rate by a quarter point last week to 3.5 per cent, and some analysts believe it could go lower at any time. The chartered banks have followed suit, reducing their prime rates to five per cent—a level unseen since 1956.

At long last, the housing market—the most interest-sensitive sector of the economy—is shaking off its stupor. Across Canada, sales of existing homes rose a respectable 21 per cent during the first nine months of the year compared with the same period in 1995. The recovery is sweeping the country, with the number of homes sold in September up over last year in all but one of the 25 largest cities. "You really started noticing it in the past two months, and especially in the past couple of weeks," says Calgary realtor John Byma. "It just seems to be snowballing." The demand for new homes is also gaining momentum. Housing starts, which last year sunk to a dismal 111,000, are expected to rise 11 per cent this year.

The upswing has everything to do with affordability. The monthly carrying cost of a 25-year, $100,000 mortgage at the five-year rate has dropped by more than $240 since the beginning of 1995. The savings on a one-year loan are even greater—topping $300. In direct response to those lower rates, the value of mortgage applications across the country has soared. The most recent figures from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. show that in the first three months of 1996, applications totalled $67 billion, $21 billion more than in the same period a year earlier.

But the cost of money is only half the story. Lower housing prices have also helped to boost demand, especially in southern Ontario and Vancouver, where rampant speculation in the late 1980s pushed prices beyond the reach of many aspiring homeowners. In Toronto, the price of an average home has dropped 28 per cent since 1989 to about $199,000, says Simon Dean, president of Royal LePage Real Estate Services Ltd. In other parts of the country, housing prices have risen a modest five per cent on average over the past seven years, to $150,944.

That combination of moderate prices and cheap mortgage rates is drawing tens of thousands of first-time buyers into the market—most of them former tenants like Tom and Sandra Stevenson of Calgary. "Now just seemed the opportune time because of the interest rates, and also because we found the right house," says 25-year-old Tom, an environmental consultant. Nationally, CMHC estimates that 37 per cent of renters can now afford to buy a home—an all-time high. The increase in affordability has been most dramatic in the country's largest city. In 1990, an average Torontonian needed to earn about $80,000 a year to purchase a house, says Will Dunning, a senior market analyst with CMHC. Today, an income of $40,000 is sufficient. Dunning says that lower mortgage rates have had the greatest impact in such cities as Calgary, Toronto and Saskatoon, where rental vacancy rates are at or below one per cent. In those cities, first-timers make up as much as 70 per cent of all home buyers. Nationally, the figure stands at about 50 per cent, compared with the traditional rate of 35 to 40 per cent, says Peter Norman, an economist with the Bank of Montreal.

Tight rental markets in some areas have set off a chain reaction that benefits the entire housing industry. As rents rise, home ownership becomes increasingly attractive, especially with rates so low. An increase in the number of first-time buyers boosts demand for lower-priced housing, helping to stabilize or lift prices and prompting existing homeowners to move up to larger, more expensive houses. As the supply of resale homes shrinks, builders construct more new housing. That virtuous circle is already taking hold in healthy markets like Saskatoon. The typical resale stock of about 1,000 listings there has fallen below 600, and houses put up for sale often attract more than five offers, says Bob Redpath, an agent with Re/Max Saskatoon. "I feel sorry for our customers, because some of them don't have much time to make up their minds," he says. The brisk demand for homes has pushed the average sale price from $81,719 in 1994 to $87,276 in September. And true to form, builders are busier.

Elsewhere, the housing outlook is not quite so rosy. For one thing, sales of existing homes nationally have levelled off over the past year at about 300,000 units, despite the continued drop in interest rates, says Pedro Antunes, an economist with the Conference Board of Canada, an Ottawa-based think-tank. And housing starts are still far below the so-called natural level of 160,000 a year that would be expected based on population growth and other demographic factors. The 111,000 starts logged last year were the industry's worst performance relative to the size of the population since the Second World War. This year's total will likely hit 123,000, and CMHC predicts 132,700 starts next year. "The industry remains in a very fragile state," says John Kenward, chief operating officer for the Canadian Home Builders' Association. If the pace of new home construction continues to lag, Canada could eventually face a housing shortage, the Bank of Montreal's Norman warns.

Kenward says that the increasing burden of land-development fees and taxes, which add about 20 per cent to the price of a house, is partly to blame for the industry's malaise. But there are more severe problems standing in the way of a full housing recovery. Foremost among them is the country's stubbornly high unemployment rate, 9.9 per cent in September. "Even if rates are dropping, if you don't have a job, you're not going to buy a house," says Antunes. He adds that the shortage of jobs for young people has forced many to continue living with their parents, sharply reducing the number of new households being formed and dampening the demand for homes.

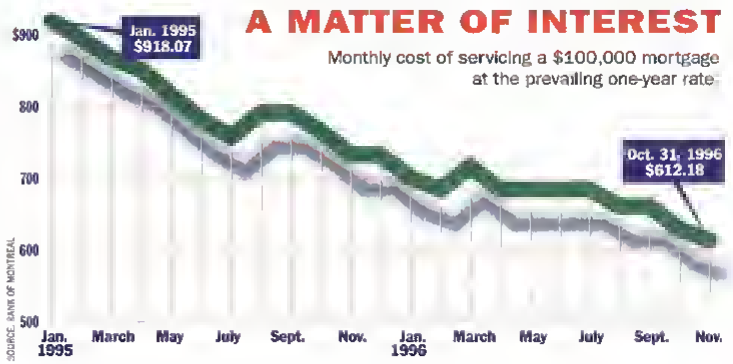
Weak income growth has also reduced the demand for housing, says Michel Laurence, a senior economist with CMHC in Ottawa. Statistics Canada reported last week that average weekly earnings in August rose 2.6 per cent from a year ago. After inflation and taxes, however, purchasing power has actually declined in Canada in recent years, says Norman. And the Conference Board says that its index of consumer confidence declined slightly in the third quarter of 1996. "Canadians just don't see the job market improving, and they remain nervous about their own financial positions," said Paul Darby, director of the board's economic services group.

The impact of strong consumer confidence has been evident in the housing market south of the border for several months. In September, sales of existing homes in the United States exceeded four million units for the seventh consecutive month, a record. New-home sales are at their highest levels in a decade. A boom may yet be in store for Canada, but it could be two years away, says Peter Andersen, a Toronto-based economic forecaster.

The good news is that the Conference Board expects both wages and consumer confidence to rise in 1997, which should fuel more buying activity. And while the average age of first-time buyers is rising—the national average is 35, compared to 32 four years ago—the idea of owning a home remains enticing. In a recent CMHC survey, 81 per cent of Canadians aged 25 to 34 agreed that housing is a good investment. Among potential first-time buyers, respondents ranked pride of ownership as even more important than a home's investment value. Like Ken Lane, an increasing number of renters are taking advantage of lower mortgage rates to buy into that dream.

JOHN SCHOFIELD *with* *ELAINE FLAHERTY in Halifax and* *MARY NEMETH in Calgary*

Lane with realtor Jack Le Fort in Halifax: 'rates are the driving factor'



BUSINESS

Mining for favors

Bre-X unearths ethical questions in Indonesia

In indonesia, the rules of business may be fluid one day immutable the next. Those who fail to keep up often find themselves benched, with very little warning. David Walsh, chief executive of Calgary based Bre-X Minerals Ltd., seemed to acknowledge that reality last week with the announcement that the gold-mining junior has formed an alliance with PT Panutan Duta, a company controlled by Sigit Harjojudanto, 45, the eldest son of Indonesia's autocratic ruler, President Suharto. Shareholders were relieved, ending a flight from the company's stock that began early last month, after two other Indonesian companies claimed a 40-per-cent interest in the richest section of Bre-X's monstrous gold find in Borneo. Most believe the connection to the all-powerful ruling family will cut a swath through the legal wrangling that has stalled the project. "They did what they had to do," said Frank Giustra, chairman of Vancouver based Yorkton Securities Inc. "It's commonly known in the industry that if you want to get anywhere in Indonesia, you need one of the Suharto children."



ENNY NURAHEN, REUTERS

Gateway to the gold, Harjojudanto and his wife, Elsye Sigit

Despite the recovery in Bre-X's share price, there was uneasiness over the deal among some in the business community. Giustra noted that, while such transactions are far from unheard of, the Bre-X deal is in a class of its own. "This one is over the top, in terms of being blatant," he said. Bre-X officials declined to comment last week. In a written statement outlining the terms of the transaction, the company made no mention of the connection with the Suharto family.

Of course, most companies do not want to discuss the problems of dealing with corruption in foreign countries, but at least one Canadian group is trying to bring the issue into the open. Later this month, a handful of companies, including Canadian General Electric and gold-mining giant Placer Dome Inc., will launch the Canadian branch of Transparency International, a German based business coalition committed to cleaning up international business practices. The motivation is partly practical. After all, notes York University business professor and Transparency member Wesley Cragg, corruption sucks revenue from a company's legitimate operations and creates something that most businesses hate—an unpredictable political environment.

But there are other, more ominous considerations, Cragg adds. Accepting corruption as a locally condoned practice in countries like Indonesia, where the human rights record is abysmal and the governing family has grown wealthy by manipulating the bureaucracy, perpetuates a vicious circle. The rationale that corruption is the norm soon becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. "This is a pattern established by a ruling elite. People have to do it because of the power of the family, not because it is a local custom," Cragg says.

There is another downside. Cragg says companies often discover that, in the murky world of patronage and influence-peddling, there are rarely any guarantees. Bre-X, for instance, hardly appears to have solved its regulatory problems in Indonesia. Last week, Indonesia's director general of mining, Kuntoro Mangkusubroto, announced that the vital government approvals necessary to begin mining operations will be withheld until the company resolves its dispute with the two Indonesian companies seeking a stake in the project.

Bre-X might have avoided some of its current problems, some experts say, if it had sought a strong Indonesian partner from the beginning and established government contacts early. Such arrangements are common around the world. Walsh, a stock promoter who ran Bre-X out of his Calgary basement until last spring, may have tried to move too quickly. Although Bre-X acquired its gold-rich Indonesian properties in 1993, Walsh did not meet Indonesia's director-general of mining until last June, at a Toronto dinner. Such oversights appear to have been costly. Bre-X's consulting and services contract with the Suharto family company will cost it a staggering $1 million a month for 40 months. As well, Bre-X will give the Indonesian company 10 per cent of its profits, with nothing in return, a concession that could cost hundreds of millions of dollars.

THE BRE-X BOUNCE

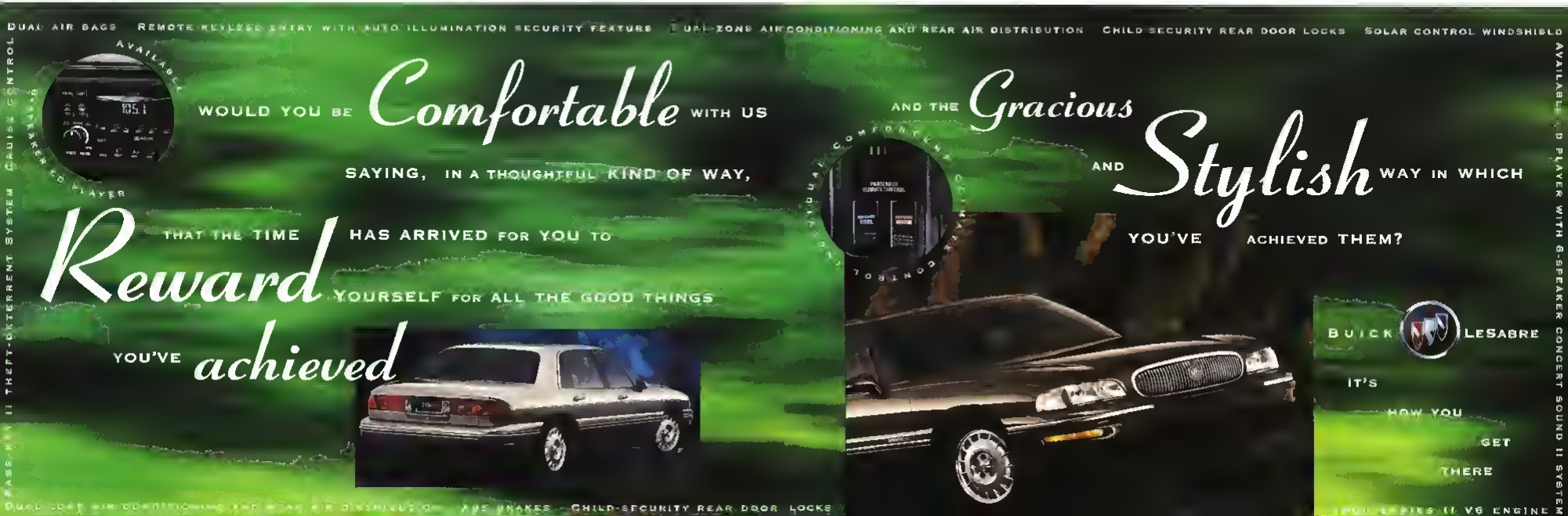
Closing price of shares in Bre-X Minerals Ltd.



SOURCE: TORONTO STOCK EXCHANGE

In an unfamiliar and corrupt business climate, is it possible to avoid payoffs altogether? Jim Cooney, director of international and public affairs for Vancouver-based Placer Dome, often travels in regions where the company has interests. Africa, Southeast Asia and South America. "There is only one way to work around it," Cooney says. "That is to build a critical mass of legitimate allies who have some concurrent interest with yours, like other businesses and the World Bank." Added Cooney: "You might ultimately spend as much money as you would in a bribe—which is a simple way of getting things done—and it's much more demanding in terms of time and energy, but in the end, there is likelihood of change." Taking that approach, he says, sometimes adds several years to a project—a delay Bre-X was apparently unwilling to accept.

PATRICIA CHISHOLM



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Ross Laver



Personal Business

High-tech dinosaurs?

The age of digital technology, for many consumers and businesses, is also an age of confusion, fear and financial insecurity. But anyone who feels overwhelmed by the frenetic pace of the silicon revolution can take solace in the fact that the dislocation in long-established industries is nothing compared to the upheaval experienced by high-tech companies themselves.

The rise and fall of Apple Computer is one illustration of the computer industry's turbulence, but there are many others. A few years ago, Digital Equipment, AST Research and Packard Bell were thriving PC manufacturers. Today, all have been pushed aside by mail-order outfits like Dell and Gateway 2000. Another example is the seesaw battle for word-processing supremacy between Bill Gates's Microsoft and WordPerfect, now owned by Ottawa-based Corel Corp. In an industry that measures product life cycles in months, rare is the company that can remain on top for more than a few years.

> The Internet is threatening the survival of commercially operated on-line services

The latest evidence of the high-tech sector's rough-and-tumble nature is the shakeout among commercial on-line networks, including America Online and CompuServe. As recently as three years ago, these proprietary information services were the undisputed rulers of the on-line world, offering a mix of news, entertainment services, chat rooms and forums on everything from attention deficit disorder to tropical fish. At the time, the Internet was still in its infancy as a consumer medium. Most people considered it too forbiddingly technical to attract a mass audience.

By 1995, however, the ground was shifting thanks to a new programming language that gave birth to the World Wide Web, an Internet service that mixes text and graphics in an easy-to-navigate format. Almost overnight, the Internet became flashier than the commercial services and, in many ways, a lot more fun. The Net was also cheaper for heavy users. Most proprietary services levy a monthly membership fee plus hourly charges of $2.50 or more for service beyond five or 10 hours a month. By contrast, flat-fee Internet accounts run about $20 a month—no need to watch the clock.

For the commercial networks, the Web's burgeoning popularity has been more a curse than a blessing. True, the explosion of interest in the Net has sharply increased the on-line audience. But much of the excitement focuses on the Web itself, which can be reached either through a proprietary service or through a direct Internet provider. Many computer users start out by subscribing to a commercial service but later switch to a direct provider to save money.

As a result, the commercial on-line networks have become virtual dinosaurs. In the past year, Apple has shut down its eWorld on-line service, News Corp. pulled the plug on Delphi Internet Services, and IBM and Sears, Roebuck & Co. walked away from their billion-dollar investment in Prodigy. CompuServe, which until last year was the largest commercial network, announced in August that its subscriber base had fallen from the previous quarter and that it expected to lose money in the first half of the current fiscal year. In a bid to halt the slide, the company cut 150 jobs at its head office in Columbus, Ohio.

The worst, however, is almost certainly yet to come. America Online, the current leader among on-line providers, told analysts last week that it was taking a $615-million charge for restructuring—an amount five times greater than the company's total pre-tax earnings over the past five years. Hoping to stem the number of subscriber defections, America Online is also offering members unlimited access for $27 a month—in effect, matching the competition. The problem is that both America Online and CompuServe incur far higher costs than other providers because of their need to operate separate networks with a wide range of original content. As young as they are, both services are going to have to fight hard to avoid extinction.

Business NOTES

SAFER AIR BAG PLANNED

Bowing to public concerns, the Big Three automakers plan to introduce a modified air bag that inflates less violently. Since 1992, air bags have been blamed for the deaths of 28 children and 19 adults. A safer bag will debut within six months, said a group representing Chrysler, Ford and General Motors. It stressed that children should always ride in the back seat.

TELECOM MEGADEAL

British phone giant BT PLC is in talks to acquire MCI Communications Corp., the second-largest U.S. telecommunications company. If approved by regulators, it would be the largest foreign takeover of a U.S. company, worth at least $27 billion.

EXITING THE OIL PATCH

Texas-born oilman J. P. Bryan plans to move the executive offices of Gulf Canada Resources Ltd., including 25 senior managers, from Calgary to Denver. Bryan says the firm has to be closer to financial markets and other major oil centres, such as Houston.

WIRELESS CABLE LICENCES

CellularVision Canada of Vancouver and two Montreal firms, Digital Vision Communications and Regional Vision Inc., won federal licences to offer wireless TV and telephone services. The companies say they will invest a combined $1 billion over the next five years, creating as many as 8,000 jobs.

NAV CANADA TAKES OFF

A private, nonprofit company called Nav Canada took over Canada's air-traffic control system and its 6,200 employees. Paying Ottawa $1.5 billion, The enterprise will be financed by user fees that airlines charge consumers. Ticket prices will not rise because air transport taxes will decline, Nav Canada says.

MITCHELLS MAKE UP

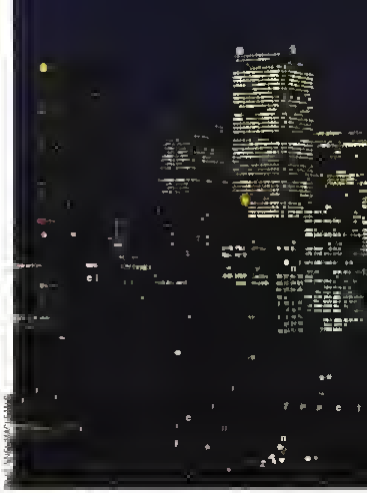
After a bitter feud, Fred Mitchell has returned to intercontinental Packers Ltd. in Saskatoon. Mitchell was ousted as president in 1994 by his mother, Johanna, brother Charles and sister Camille. His mother later sued him over business expenses, and his sister was charged last May with threatening to kill his wife. But in a surprise reconciliation, Mitchell has returned as vice-chairman.

An open-door banking policy

Canada should join the rest of the industrialized world and allow foreign banks to operate freely in the country, two parliamentary committees have recommended. Michael Kirby, chairman of the Senate banking committee, said that Canadian borrowers and savers would benefit from increased competition between offshore and domestic banks. The total amount that a foreign bank can lend is now determined by the capital base of its Canadian subsidiary. Both the Senate banking committee and the Commons finance committee say that Ottawa should allow offshore banks to lend money based on the much larger asset portfolios of their parents.

In June, Douglas Peters, secretary of state for international financial institutions, released a white paper on reforms to the Bank Act that proposed a gradual reduction of some of the restrictions on foreign banks. The two committees want the government to go much further. Toronto Liberal MP Jim Peterson, chairman of the finance committee, said he would like to see the creation of a new category of foreign-owned "near bank" that would be free to lend money in Canada without setting up a federally regulated bank subsidiary. He noted that Canada and Mexico are the only two member countries of the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development that impose stiff restrictions on foreign banks. As a result, Canada, Peterson says, is losing valuable foreign investment.

Canada's Big Six banks have for years fought to minimize the activities of foreign banks in the country. Recently, however, they withdrew their objections in the hope that Ottawa would respond by granting them the right to compete in the foreign-dominated fields of insurance and auto-leasing.



Toronto's financial district: more competition

AIRLINES

Canadian's rescue plan

Its future in jeopardy, Calgary-based Canadian Airlines International Ltd. announced a massive restructuring designed to save $800 million over the next four years. "We don't have many options," confessed Kevin Benson, the airline's chief executive.

Benson is urging employees to accept a 10-per-cent pay cut, the first step in a reorganization that will also involve reductions in the number of domestic flights and requests for concessions from suppliers and shareholders. In addition, Benson plans to ask Ottawa and the company's financial backers to renegotiate their loans.

The restructuring is the latest in a series of efforts to prop up the troubled carrier. Since 1990, Canadian has lost a total of $1.26 billion. Its cash reserves as of Sept. 30 were a mere $111 million, scarcely enough to make it through the rest of the year.

Magna's boss takes a $27-million pay cut

Canada's highest-paid executive is tightening his belt. Frank Stronach, chairman of Magna International Inc., Canada's largest auto-parts maker, is taking a hefty $26.8-million pay cut—forcing him to get by this year on a more modest $20.4 million. Documents submitted to securities regulators show that he will receive a base salary of $200,000 as well as $20.2 million in fees paid by European subsidiaries of Magna to Frank Stronach & Co. for consulting services. Despite the cut, the company felt compelled to defend his salary in its annual information form. "Mr. Stronach's historical compensation reflects his special position as the corporation's founder and architect of Magna's unique, entrepreneurial culture."



PETER BREGG/MACLEAN'S

Stronach: 'special position'



Peter C. Newman

Finding new freedom with a pony tail

For an increasing number of Canadian business executives, the lure of dropping out and travelling in the slow lane is becoming irresistible. Deal-making may be their lifeblood, but times have seldom been more opportune to quit and enjoy independence. History's longest bull market has armed most of these paladins with enough money to start over, while health warnings often endow the idea of opting out of the rat race with the necessary motivation.

In the Oct. 28 issue of *Maclean's*, Marci McDonald documented the growth of this trend, as more and more Canadians move to small towns and villages where they can stop to smell the compost. Quietly, but with determination to enjoy what's left of their lives, many mid- and upper-level managers are leaving their jobs (voluntarily or otherwise), starting to work at home and frequently switching occupations in the process.

Former stock market operators like Toronto's David Pols, who left his job in June of 1991 to fashion a brand new existence, provide lively examples that there is life after Bay Street. Pols left his position as chief financial officer for Andy Sarlos & Associates, one of the Street's most aggressive merchant bankers, five years before retirement age, and has since followed his dreams. "The day I left," he told me recently, "I burned my résumés and donated my suits to the Salvation Army. I had 10—five for winter and five for summer, one for each work day. Now, I just have one for weddings and funerals. I also threw my briefcase away and started to grow a pony tail. In fact, I haven't been to a barber since July, 1992."

> 'Our lives are all that really belongs to us. So it is how we use them that determines what kind of men we are'

"My main advice to Bay Street or professional people who want to grab a life," he continues, "is that they not wait too long. Too many potential burnouts keep putting off their departures until their health is gone or threatened, and the opportunity to try something else has passed them by. You must pick out an alternative occupation before you leave your regular job. The people who die quickly when they leave high-pressure positions are those who abandon their sense of motivation. Ideally, new lines of work ought to involve doing exactly what you enjoy most, but didn't previously have time to pursue. The essential difference is that you're now following your own agenda and your own timetable."

In Pols's case, that has meant turning his hobby of playing jazz piano into an almost full-time second career. Since leaving Bay Street, he has also made a couple of his other aspirations come true: to master the flute and earn his ham radio licence. These diversions hardly qualify as impossible dreams, but they were little more than idle fantasies when Pols was negotiating million-dollar bank loans for Sarlos and acting as chief accountant for half a dozen highly complex in-house corporations. "Working for Andy was like being on some wonderful drug," Pols recalls. "He was very good to his senior staff, allowing us to participate in financial opportunities and inviting us to most of the fancy dinners and occasions he hosted or attended. My life was hectic, rewarding and challenging, but it didn't belong to me."

It took Pols two years before he made the final decision to quit. His wife, Pamela, who is 12 years younger, still teaches at an elementary school in Brampton, Ont., but in 1991 she was able to participate in a year-long exchange program that gave the couple use of a house in Australia, at Hervey Bay, right next to the Great Barrier Reef. As well as diving, Pols kept busy Down Under by accompanying three school choirs during their rehearsals and tours; on weekends the couple travelled throughout the island continent.

Back in Toronto, Pols wrote his exams as a ham radio operator and enrolled in the University of Toronto's Royal Conservatory to learn the subtleties of the flute. At a time when most professional musicians are underemployed, he now rents himself out as a piano soloist and is the resident soloist at the Ontario Club, a private dining venue for members of Toronto's business Establishment who can't make it into the Toronto Club. Last summer, he also played aboard the Lady Muskoka, a pleasure steamer that tours Lakes Joseph and Rosseau in the vacation country north of Toronto. As well as providing background tinkling noises to the usual round of cocktail parties and weddings, he has performed three afternoon concerts at Roy Thomson Hall (accompanying singer Tommy Lovgrove) as part of an "entertainment for seniors" series sponsored by the Royal Bank. "I had the great thrill of playing Glenn Gould's piano, which is the house instrument at Thomson," he recalls. Pols has since been hired by The Bay to play during fashion shows and has recorded one radio commercial.

Just as he planned his escape from his first career, Pols is now busy developing a strategy for leaving his musical incarnation. "Our family motto," he says, "is that we're not going to leave any money to the children. We're going to spend it all on ourselves. As soon as Pam retires next year, we're off on a round-the-world trip. I've already told the kids: 'No money for you. Mom and I are going to enjoy ourselves.' We have two daughters, both married and both comfortably off, who have accepted our decision."

There are many paths to happiness, but busting your gut for the sole purpose of fattening somebody else's bottom line isn't one of them. Cesar Chavez, the organizer of fruit pickers in southern California, got it right, when he once mused: "When we're honest with ourselves, we must admit that our lives are all that really belongs to us. So it is how we use our lives that determines what kind of men we are."

David Pols certainly has bought into that credo.



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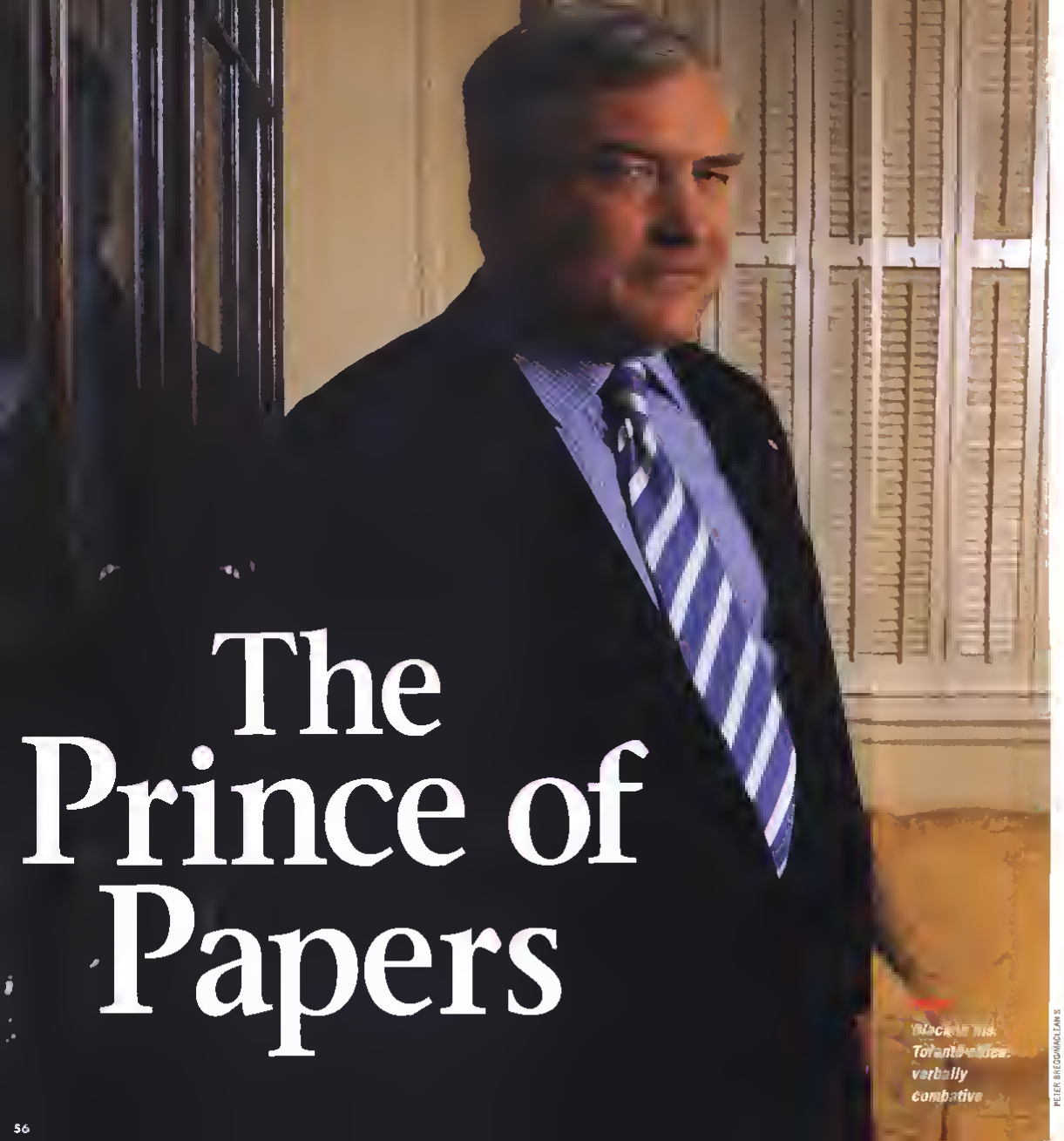


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The Prince of Papers

Black in his Toronto office: verbally combative

PETER BREGG/MACLEAN'S

He styles himself as the savior of papers, but critics label Conrad Black an editorial storm trooper

BY JENNIFER WELLS

David Radler is on the phone from Vancouver. It is Saturday, but no matter, Radler is in the office anyway, the cruddy one on West 5th Avenue, the one littered with tacky memorabilia of the Grand Ole Opry and near-ancient business deals. He is blustering in that venomously verbal style of his. "It's the same crap all over again," he says of this latest request for interview time. "I'm starting to feel that I'm overexposed, and surely to God Conrad's overexposed." Any media treatment, he says—and this conversation was prior to the two-part series that ran recently on CBC TV's 10 o'clock newsmagazine slot—will only personalize Black, the newspaper baron, and his baronet, Radler. And what, pray tell, is wrong with that? "They expose us as human," he says. "That can't do any good. People lose their fear." David Radler is enjoying this.

Conrad Black moves smoothly into the French yellow, damasked and mahogany stateroom in the headquarters of Hollinger Inc. in downtown Toronto. It is true, as he has maintained, that he does not have horns, that he is not cloven-hoofed. But this is the only absolute.

He holds out a copy of an opinion piece, which he has written and is about to force-feed to the 58 daily papers he now controls in this country. He will even fax it to *The Financial Post*, which he does not control—he owns 20 per cent—but which will run it anyway. This is Black's response to the CBC and its two-part report, the one that, he says, attempted to "demonize" him as a horn-sprouting, ground pawing extremist and annexationist out to contort the editorial views of the papers he now owns, which, tallied, account for 43 per cent of the country's newspaper circulation. "The prospect of the varying of the virtual monopoly the soft left has had on central outlets of information in Canada has presumably motivated them to this fantastic imputation of a conspiracy to a *coup de presse*," says the piece. It would be a mistake to describe the riposte as perfectly Conradian, for it fell flaccid compared with his other works. It is fair to suggest, judging from the letters it prompted, that someone should have told him not to write it. Many readers argued that Black's heavy-handed op-ed tactics only supported the fears that he would editorially storm-troop his papers.

But Conrad Black is not one for advisers, handlers or flunkies. He arrives for interviews buck-naked, in public relations terms. And he proceeds to present the predictable case for why newspaper readers have nothing to fear from Hollinger's takeover of Southam Inc., which finally advanced the Black group in Canada from its collection of small to mid-sized papers to the mass market dailies that have been the Southam trademark. This week, Hollinger will mail to Southam shareholders an offer to purchase a further seven million Southam shares, which, if successful, will nudge Hollinger's stake above 50 per cent, a move that, says one industry analyst, will make Black "10 feet tall and bulletproof." Concurrently, Black has swept seven Atlantic papers, which he bought earlier in the year from Thomson Corp., into the Southam group, giving the company coast-to-coast coverage. The long view is to build a worldwide paper chain, satisfying the advertising needs of 200 transnational companies. "Whether it's Chevrolet or Coca-Cola, we're going to have to satisfy them," says Radler. "That doesn't change the content, but as an organization we're going to have to have a world presence."

Ten years ago, Hollinger had not much of a paper presence at all, save for a smattering of West Coast titles huddled together as Sterling Newspapers. "Do you realize this whole company, as we know it, is only 10 years old?" asks Radler. "Now, we're the third-largest newspaper company in the Western world," after Rupert Murdoch and the Gannett chain. "And Gannett is only in the United States, and Murdoch is really only in Australia and England. I mean, we are serious players today."

Black and his cohorts got serious 11 years ago, to be precise, when they started buying into the *Daily Telegraph* in London. They picked up the *Jerusalem Post* in 1989, a 15-per-cent piece of Australia's Fairfax chain in 1991 (Hollinger has 25 per cent today), and, in 1994, bought out the *Chicago Sun-Times*, the number 2 daily in the third-largest U.S. market. The peripatetic Radler, based in Vancouver more than anywhere else, but not really based anywhere, is its publisher. Those papers have now been mixed in with the small to middling papers that Radler avari-

Black brushes aside fear of media concentration

ciously gobbled in the United States over the past decade to form Hollinger International.

Now Radler and Black are clarifying the vision in Canada. Southam is its centrepiece, which is why Radler and Black are now perusing the 1997 budgets for the likes of *The Ottawa Citizen*, *The Edmonton Journal*, the Montreal *Gazette*, *The Vancouver Sun*. The power of these Southam papers has long tantalized Black. In November, 1992, he picked up a 23-per-cent stake from Torstar Corp. What Black had not counted on was the subsequent arrival of Paul Desmarais's Power Corp. Each wound up holding just shy of 20 per cent of the company. Last August, Hollinger took Power out. Now, Black and Radler have it all. And no, says Black, that does not mean there has suddenly grown cause for concern about media concentration. "Newspapers don't have as much influence to alter or lead public opinion as they once did," he says, citing the increased power of electronic media. Besides, he adds, the price of playing editorial dictator is far too great. Look at *The Observer* in London. "When Tiny Rowland got hold of it and used it as a flying carpet for all his vendettas, the circulation steadily declined," says Black, repeating almost word for word what he wrote in his 1993 autobiography, *A Life in Progress*. "You can't use franchises in that way in a serious country without paying a heavy price."



Barlow: fighting the Southam takeover

In an earlier telephone interview, Black was somewhat more florid, lamenting what he views as the press monopoly of the "bland, uncontroversial, victim-culture left,' including the CBC, which has cast him as an "odious," "monstrous," "extreme," "overbearing," "authoritarian," who "puts on funny uniforms with arm bands and marches around the room with a riding crop." Rather, he sees in himself a newsprint savior. "There isn't exactly a queue or stampede of people to buy these papers," he says. Hollinger is anteing up, while "Ken Thomson, Desmarais and Ted Rogers are running for the exits and Torstar and [Pierre] Péladeau are sitting on their hands." He finds it a "bit rich" to have to take this flak from the left" while answering to an investment community that is questioning the very big bet that Black has made on the newspaper trade. In the past year, Hollinger has spent $500 million on acquisitions, $294 million of that on Southam.

The flak from the left comes in part from Maude Barlow and the Council of Canadians. In September, Barlow's group sued the federal government, seeking a judicial review of the Competition Bureau's approval of the Southam takeover. "They rubber stamped it," says Barlow of the bureau's advance ruling. "I think it's because they all went out for drinks at some nice restaurant in Hull." The result, she says, is that the diversity of the country's media is getting squeezed. The Hollinger style, which in Barlow's view consists of staff reductions from such crucial beats as labor, health and education, leaves news holes fed by stock national chain footage of the type produced by rightist columnists Andrew Coyne of Southam News and Black's wife Barbara Amiel, who, says Barlow, "sits in her mansion and writes." And so Barlow says, "The whole notion of a plurality of voices is not carried . . . I think you're going to see a groundswell of concern across the country. There's nothing to stop this guy from buying your paper, and that's not right. That's not democracy. That's an illusion of democracy." Barlow's group wants to see the Southam takeover rolled back. Barlow says that under the right legislation even Southam itself could be seen as too mighty.

But it would be a mistake to cast this story as simply about left versus right, as much as that battle fuels Black's own verbally combative bent. It is more about the evolution of newspapering. In *Read All About It!*, American Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist James Squires lamented the passing of the era of entrepreneurial paper proprietors into the maw of faceless, multimedia corporate titans that replace investigative reporting with lightweight entertainment stories. Black is not that, says Squires. Instead he is an industry oddity, focusing almost solely on newspapers, at least thus far. While Black muses about buying in big to other media one day, he is, for now, a press man. And that is what gives him the look of the press barons of early American journalism, of William Randolph Hearst and Col. Robert McCormick, the proprietors who *did* shape public opinion. Black, says Squires, "is probably the lone remaining press baron in the world."

But Black is not solely that. He is, rather, a hybrid. On behalf of Hollinger, Radler squeezes profits from the small circulation papers, turning them into cash spinners, then financing further purchases on that cash flow. Yet Black has been true to his word of maintaining high journalistic standards at the *Daily Telegraph* in London. At least in some markets, Black recognizes that the readers are as important as the shareholders. Now, he has started to play his hand with Southam. As Squires sees it, having so many papers in the control of one company is certainly not ideal for Canadians. But it is not necessarily bad, given the rather bleak alternatives. And newspapers could have a strong future, if you believe, as Squires does, that even with competing media "we're still a poorly informed society in terms of knowing things we ought to know." Squires spent 8½ years as editor of the *Chicago Tribune*. He knows the recipe for good newspapering. "The essence of journalism," he says, "is journalists and space."

Marching to a new drummer

***Within months of the Southam takeover, Black and Radler installed new editors at* The Ottawa Citizen *(left) and the* Montreal Gazette**



(L TO R) MIKE PINDER, OTTAWA CITIZEN; MONTREAL GAZETTE (2)

'No one was fired!'

Radler talks about his tactics

When David Radler was an adolescent in Montreal, he did some things other kids might not have done. He read the *New York Daily News*—"Better sports pages' —and *The Financial Post*—"I liked money." He invested in his first stock at 12—the White Pass and Yukon Rail.

David Radler and Peter White are being chauffeured in a Lincoln Town Car by a guy named Bill from the stately Hollinger manse at 10 Toronto St. to the brick bunker offices of Southam at the top end of the city. It was Black, White and Radler who started the paper caper in the first place, in 1969, when they bought the Sherbrooke *Record*. Of the threesome, White has been the least visible, his official title executive vice-president of Ravelston Corp., a private holding company. While Black has been the front man, Radler has been the human chain saw, the operative who moves into newly acquired properties and gets them right-sized. This is not how he describes it. "I make trips. I visit publishers. I try to bring a little bit of Hollinger into their lives." Mr. Black, Mr. White and Mr. Radler: corporate Reservoir Dogs.

Earlier in the day, Radler had addressed the Maude Barlow charges. There is no right-wing agenda, he says. "It would be dumb business to do what she suggested and we're not dumb businessmen. You've got to be relevant in the community. Let's assume we eliminated any liberal thought from *The Edmonton Journal*. We'd pay a terrible price. People would stop reading it."

But then, Radler is a bit of a *Journal* fan, as opposed to his broader take on the Southam group. "They were zero newspapers," he says. "What really bothered me about half those newspapers is that they really didn't have a view. They were sitting there with no views at all." He describes *Journal* publisher Linda Hughes as "one of the brighter stars in the Southam stable." Hughes moved up to publisher after Don Babick went west to manage Southam's Vancouver properties, the *Sun* and *The Province*. Radler and Black are keen on Babick, who is now president of Southam. Hughes says she and Radler talked in only the most "general way," when he toured through that newsroom in mid-October. There has been no high Black handedness there, she says. And while "it's fair to say that when ownership changes, people worry," change is nothing new to Southam.

That is putting it politely. Southam had been a mess since the mid-'80s. The company lost its leadership keel when Gordon Fisher died of cancer in 1985 after running the Southam shop for a decade. Southam quickly sold a near-quarter share of the company to Torstar, publisher of *The Toronto Star*, a defensive manoeuvre by the Southam board, which spied such corporate intruders as Conrad Black waiting to swoop in on the vulnerable paper empire.

The subsequent years were torturous. The recession brought collapsing advertising revenue. Circulations fell and collection of small papers, then agreed in 1978 to sell the lot to Maclean Hunter. MH, he says, started "grinding" him on the price, so he walked away from the deal. But the focus was on Black's other properties: Argus, Norcen Energy, Dominion Stores.

As the media persona of Conrad Black grew and grew, Radler remained the shadowed sidekick. Then, the refocus to newspapers gave Radler his calling: gobbling small U.S. papers from Akron, Colo., to Yreka, Calif.

When he buys a paper, Radler will look anywhere to save a nickel. Janitorial services. Sports tickets. Association fees. And when he talks about his tactics, he sounds nothing at all like the ponderous Black.

On "demanning" at the Sherbrooke *Record*: "We went from 48 people to 24. Is that Draconian? I guess."

On costs at the *Chicago Sun-Times*: "We were spending $350,000 on the American Newspaper Publishers Association. Do I have to tell you? I'm no longer a member."

On helping the *Jerusalem Post* tilt to the right: "I never fired anyone! No one was fired! Thirty-two resigned. Now, it was convenient for me, because there were 32 too many people, if not more. In the editorial department at that time."

On Bill Peterson, past publisher of the Kingston *Whig-Standard*: "Here's a guy who in the third quarter made 1.7 per cent [profit margin]. Does that say it all? Alright?"

On paper empires: "I don't have any proof of anything. I'm going to tell you, OK? But on every $100 million dollars at Thomson, let's assume there's going to be $4 million of fat. If I go to Southam, I know that there's $12 million of fat, OK?"



PETER BREGG/MACLEAN'S

Hollinger's Radler, looking anywhere to save a nickel

'Demanning' is very much a Hollinger word

chains such as Southam and Gannett desperately sought solutions from management consultants and readership task forces. Newspapers were once a business of immovably fat profit margins. They were no longer. In 1991, Southam lost $153 million.

In stepped a fellow named Bill Ardell as chief executive officer, the first non-Southam family member to run the firm. Ardell had come up through Southam via the low-rent Coles book store chain, which he had turned around in large part by what corporate types call "cost containment." Ardell's appointment to the top job caught insiders and outsiders by surprise, chiefly because Southam was always seen as an ardent defender of editorial quality, a subject about which Ardell admittedly knew nothing. He quickly spooked the Southam ranks by describing the company as "mediocre." It was Torstar then that was demanding that Southam get fixed, that it get *some* return on its investment. It didn't. Torstar sold its bit to Hollinger. "As much as they didn't love us," says Radler of the Southam directors, "they didn't love them." Adds White of Torstar: "They'd had it."



Peterson, taking on Hollinger in Saskatchewan

Three months after Hollinger stepped in, Ardell announced a three-year plan for Southam staff reductions of 1,550. Two months after that, in March, 1993, Power bought into Southam. "Let's get this straight," says Radler. "We were more than willing to have a fifty-fifty deal with Power. We were reconciled to a fifty-fifty deal, OK?" But the Hollinger group wanted faster, improved returns; the Power group was more the patient investor. Says White: "The way I look at it, Paul Desmarais has always been a passive investor; his whole life. He never invested in a company to run it. He always says, 'Let management do their job.' The trouble was management wasn't doing their job."

That would be Ardell, whom White calls a "generalist," and whom Black refers to as someone who "didn't have any particular feel for newspapers as a product, or particularly strong views on how to write or edit or promote them." White suggests that hiring a generalist would not be Hollinger's style, but the company had done just that in Australia, where Bob Mansfield—a telecommunications type—was put in the CEO's chair at Fairfax. He lasted six months, before "retiring" at the age of 44, to be replaced by someone from Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. Worse, in the narrow sights of the number-crunching Radler, Ardell had hired a bunch of highly paid generalist lieutenants. "Let me give you a statistic," says Radler. "Southam's costs of operating their head office was about four per cent of sales. We can operate the Hollinger group of companies at about 1.1 per cent. Somewhere along the line there was a $25-million nut. That had to be addressed."

Radler started "getting in management's hair," as he puts it, to accomplish that and more. But when Power initiated a proposal to have Hollinger assume ownership of the smaller papers, leaving Power with a larger piece of the remaining company, Black and Radler jumped at it. Or so it seemed. Smaller papers are Radler's forte. He built the company's U.S. publishing group to more than 100 daily papers, more than 340 papers when the biweeklies and shopping guides are added. And they would be rid of the Southam headache.

"These guys are used to stuff they own outright and don't have to ask anyone else," says Adam Zimmerman, an outside Southam director at the time. The plan, he says, "reduced the basic business of the company to satisfy the differences of a couple of shareholders." On May 9, Southam chairman Ron Cliff sent a letter to Black and Desmarais, notifying both that any further contact with Southam management would be conducted only through himself. Black's subsequent version of events is this: "After Ron Cliff's letter, Mr. Desmarais phoned me and said, 'Somebody's going to have to clean this place up. I'm 69 years old and I don't feel like having a go at it, so you should do it. I'll sell you my stock.'" Says Radler: "One day, the independent directors—who were obnoxious OK?—and who worked against the interests of the company in our opinion—OK?—they overstepped to the point where even Desmarais quit." Says Zimmerman, who has closely studied the Black strategy: "The world is unfolding as he had it in mind."

On May 24, Hollinger announced its buy-out of Power. On July 22, Southam shareholders gathered in a basement hotel conference room to vote the removal of the independent directors. "We've had tragedy and we've had disagreement," said Adam Zimmerman, capturing for a brief moment the Southam torment. Across the room sat Radler, all buffed and polished and looking as though he had just flown in from Palm Beach, beside retired Chief Justice Charles Dubin of the Ontario Court of Appeal, who was about to be voted on to the board. Bill Ardell chaired the meeting, saying something very strange about having had "no indication that Hollinger is not satisfied with the plan." One shareholder rose to quote 1960s radical Abbie Hoffman, which, had Black been there, might have seemed a bit rich. "Don't tell me what you believe," he said. "Tell me what you do and I'll tell you what you believe." Three weeks later, Bill Ardell was gone, even though, says Radler, he tried to "accommodate" himself to Hollinger. "People like Ardell are very accommodating professionally," Radler says.

Four months before the Southam gathering, the employees of the Regina *Leader-Post* were called to appear at the Queensbury Downs racetrack, where they were divided into two rooms. Across town, Michael Sifton, scion of the Sifton paper clan that had sold *The Leader Post* and the Saskatoon *Star Phoenix* to Hollinger, announced the layoffs of 173 workers, more than 20 per cent of the staff. At the racetrack, one room served as a catchment area for the group to be kept on, the other for those to be removed.

"If we had the faintest idea that it was going to be handled like that, we would have intervened," says Black. Being the new owner, why did he not have the faintest idea? "Because we believe in local control of these papers and Michael Sifton said, 'There's room for demanning and I'll do it,'" says Black.

Demanning is very much a Hollinger word and one used by Black, Radler and White since the Sherbrooke days. And had the situation in Saskatchewan been handled differently from a public relations point of view, the result would have been the same. In order to get margins up at papers of this size, Hollinger ratchets costs down.

Some staffers have bounced to two new tabloids started by Bill Peterson, who quit his post as publisher of the Kingston *Whig-Standard* in August. He has installed Ardell on his board. "I decided I'm not a Hollinger kind of guy," says Peterson, whose papers, one in Saskatoon, the other in Regina, will debut in the middle of November. Both papers will run twice weekly, but will nevertheless compete with Hollinger's papers for advertising revenue. "If they start playing with a rubber rate card," says Peterson, referring to the advertising rates set by all papers, "we have the financial backing to fight back."

The Saskatchewan economy is booming, so Peterson's timing may be just right. For Hollinger, it will mean editorial competition from some of the same columnists who used to appear under the *Star Phoenix* and *Leader-Post* banners. Nick Russell, a professor at the school of journalism in Regina, says he has not seen substantive changes yet in the quality of *The Leader Post*. "We've gone from one owner owning the one paper in town to another owner owning the one paper in town." Still, the journalism students at the University of Regina have started what Russell calls a six-month "number-crunching" review of both papers, a compare-and-contrast exercise that will study the size of the "news hole," the amount of wire copy as opposed to fresh reporting, and so on.

But the large-circulation dailies that Hollinger now holds in Canada are a more complex puzzle. In the first place, they hold editorial interest for Black, something that the *Marion Daily Republican*, in Marion, Ill., does not. And so, since the Southam takeover, Black has been personally and directly involved in the affairs of the Montreal *Gazette*, where editor Joan Fraser was quickly fired, and *The Ottawa Citizen*, where editor Jim Travers resigned (page 62). There is an unearthly silence in some newsrooms as staff await the next announcement. Jay Bryan, a business columnist with *The Gazette*, was called for a one-on-one with Black in September. He dutifully reported to the headquarters of UniMedia Inc., Hollinger's French language paper based in Montreal. There was Black in shirtsleeves. He seemed very normal. Harmless. "I kind of expected some guy who would be 20 feet tall, and he would be standing there with a flaming sword with 15 or 20 journalists impaled on it," says Bryan. "And instead there's this sort of rumpled, tired-looking guy who didn't know how to turn off the lights." From what Bryan has seen, Black is "anything but a grinder of journalists' bones."

But the Black group does not necessarily move with speed. While publisher Sam McKeel departed soon after Radler stepped in to the *Chicago Sun-Times*, it took 18 months before Radler turfed Dennis Britton from the editor's chair, replacing him with Nigel Wade from the *Telegraph*. At about the same time, Barbara Amiel took on the role of vice-president, editorial, for all of Hollinger. Radler took over as *Sun-Times* publisher. Radler wants a 25-per-cent profit margin in Chicago. He is getting less than 15. Richard Siklos, a reporter with *The Financial Post* who wrote a biography of Black, says he is surprised the Southam papers have not seen more Conradian moves. "I would have expected him to bring in some heavyweights from the U.K.," says Siklos. "In the context of the overall Hollinger empire, it almost looks as though they're running Southam like a part-time job. Where's the militant force?" This was a takeover, after all.



With wife Barbara Amiel: a complex puzzle

PHOTO: SASKATCHEWAN LEADER-POST

'There isn't exactly a stampede of people to buy these papers'

Back at 10 Toronto St., Black speaks to the need to claw back circulation gained by *The Globe and Mail* in Montreal and Ottawa and, less so, Vancouver. Black is 52 now, and there is so much left to do. Bay Street expects him to spread his assets around, to sweep more properties into Southam, which is relatively light with debt, from the debt-heavy Hollinger, as he did with those East Coast papers he bought from Thomson. And there remains a handful of independent paper plums to be picked. Hollinger still has no presence in Toronto. Black intends to fix that. Hollinger's offer to acquire *The Financial Post* is still on the table. If Hollinger gets the *Post*, the company in Canada will look whole, though still lacking a paper of political influence in Toronto. "Do you really think Conrad's losing sleep over not getting *The Globe and Mail*?" says Radler, in answer to the obvious.

South of the border, Hollinger International still needs a big-circulation star paper or two. "Obviously," says Black, "a lot depends on whether our predictions for the comparatively bright future of the newspaper industry are proved to be accurate or not." Doug Kirk, a telecommunications and media analyst at Nesbitt Burns in Toronto, thinks Black has bet right. "We believe it's a propitious time to have purchased newspaper businesses," he says. Kirk cites four factors: advances in technology; the effects of consolidation (the "big wins" theory); the fact that it's a good time in the newsprint cycle, as paper costs have fallen dramatically; and the moderate increases in newspaper advertising revenues and circulation.

Sitting outside Southam headquarters, David Radler starts prattling numbers. "It is the right bet!" he says. "Every day, there are 66 million people in North America who spend anywhere from 25 cents to four bucks to buy a paper. In addition there are another 20 million who buy weeklies. Eighty-six million people. I don't think that's so terrible. I don't think that's the sign of a dying industry."

Maybe so. But Radler is the stats end of Hollinger, the Robert McNamara of newspapers. It's up to Black to ensure that getting the numbers right is merely a manoeuvre, that producing top-quality papers is what counts in the end. If he doesn't, readers will vote with their quarters. □

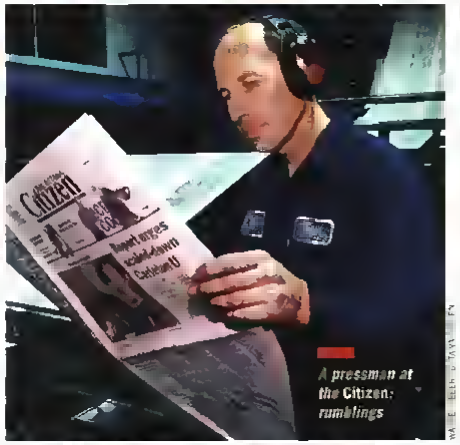
COVER

Winds of Change

Black orders a shakeup at *The Ottawa Citizen*

Where ignorant armies clash by night

Neil Reynolds is quoting Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach." A framed copy hangs in his Long Reach home, his country post outside Saint John, N.B. The poem was a farewell gift from the staff of the Kingston *Whig-Standard*, where Reynolds worked from 1976 to 1992, ultimately as its editor. Last week Reynolds bid farewell to Long Reach, from where, over the past three years, he has transformed the *Telegraph-Journal*, owned by the industrialist Irvings, into a lively, intellectually aggressive newspaper. This week, he takes up his post at *The Ottawa Citizen*, owned by newsmonger Conrad Black, who is praying for a similar conversion. Perhaps it would have been more fitting if Reynolds had backed up his "Dover Beach" recitation by a line to read: "Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight."



A pressman at the Citizen: rumblings

For that was certainly the early tenor of the *Citizen* after Black's Hollinger took over the paper as part of its acquisition of Southam last May. Last month, after weeks of discussions, the paper's editor, Jim Travers, was out the door. But he was not fired. There were, says Travers, offers of other positions, which he will not specify. Reynolds had already been picked to succeed Travers. Of Travers, Black says: 'We didn't throw him off the roof of the building.' Of the paper itself, he says that on a number of fronts—specifically national political reporting—the *Citizen* is a rather dreadful publication. Travers says Black's assessment was akin to "the CEO of General Motors standing up and saying 'We have a terrible workforce that produces pretty terrible cars.' " Black is not one for soft verbal touches. "Someone," he says, "had to go."

Yet Black also says that when a paper does perform dismally, the buck stops with the publisher. So why, in this case, did the buck not stop with *Citizen* publisher Russ Mills? "The thought has occurred to me and has been discussed with him," says Black, who blows a metaphorically chill wind through his corporate chambers when he says this. Mills, he continues, "satisfied [Southam president] Don Babick and myself that he was not entirely responsible for the shortcomings of the *Citizen*, and that he had undergone what, in ecclesiastical matters, is called grace of conversion, sincerely dedicated and strongly motivated to do what we all agreed needed to be done."

But what does that mean editorially? Travers's take is that having the Hollinger hand on the *Citizen* means no longer weighing all the evidence before striking an editorial stance. The *Citizen*'s endorsements under his leadership, he says, ran across the political spectrum. Now, he says, the right-of-centre position will be firmly taken "and they will see everything through this prism." In support of this, many have pointed to Reynolds's Libertarian politics—he ran under that banner in a 1982 federal byelection. But Douglas Fetherling, who worked for Reynolds at the *Whig* and who recounted the life of that storied paper in his 1993 book *A Little Bit of Thunder*, said that "Reynolds had a policy of putting leftists and rightists in the same box, and then rattling it from time to time." He says he never felt the weight of his boss's own politics, and adds that Reynold's arrival at the *Citizen* is "the most hopeful thing that's happened in the dreary world of Canadian newspapers for quite some time."

Still, there is reason for apprehension in the newsroom. "The *Citizen* and Southam News between them have a parliamentary bureau of 15 journalists," says Black, who talks about getting "a proper return on the bodies that are there. They're not paid just to read Hansard."

Reynolds will not comment on how he intends to improve the *Citizen*, nor will he discuss the rumor that he had earlier agreed to become managing editor of *The Globe and Mail*, only to change his mind. What is known is that under Reynolds, reporters at the *Whig* did some of their best work, including exposing a pedophilic choirmaster at St. George's Cathedral in Kingston and reporting from such international hot spots as Afghanistan. The *Whig* then had a circulation of just 40,000.

Southam bought the paper in October, 1990. It was all downhill from there, as the company fell into the recessionary pit and costs had to be cut—and cut again. Circulation fell. Under Southam, wrote Fetherling, "there were endless retreats and workshops in which managers, middle managers and sometimes just plain people on the make wore team T-shirts and learned such skills as *strategizing* and *visioning*." Reynolds quit, said Fetherling, "powerless to change the downward revision of the paper's IQ."

Reynolds will have to be very smart to stand against Black. There are rumblings at the *Citizen* that the Hollinger hand is already showing. Editors have been upbraided for running copy from Britain's left-of-centre *Guardian* instead of material from Hollinger's *Telegraph*. And a letters battle between Black and retired Southam columnist Chris Young—in which Black called Young a "failed and trivial partisan"—only confirmed for some people Black's presumed dispiteous nature. That the *Citizen* did not run Young's reply was seen in the newsroom as a damning indictment of the new regime. The question is, would Neil Reynolds have run it?

JENNIFER WELLS



A troubled watch

Prison guards confront the demons

BY D'ARCY JENISH



Doucette: 'I couldn't go to work. I was having anxiety attacks'

PHIL SNELMACLEAN S

Jeff Doucette is quiet man who wears wire-rimmed glasses and a stubbly beard. He could pass for a high-school English teacher if it weren't for the tremors in his hands, and the stories he tells. A 42-year-old Kingston, Ont., resident, married and the father of one, Doucette worked for 15 years as a correctional officer in some of Canada's worst jails and came out with emotional scars that will likely last for life. He was exposed to beatings, stabbings, murders and riots, and once had to assist a fellow guard whose throat had been slashed by a razor-wielding inmate. He witnessed so much violence that he eventually developed a nervous disorder that left his hands permanently trembling, and had to leave his job as a correctional officer in May, 1994, for a less-stressful position in the prison system. "Some things you just never forget," he says. "After you've been through a few good slashings, you can walk down a range and you know somebody's been slashed, just from from the smell of blood."

Doucette spent several months off work in mid-1994, recovering from the worst effects of what his psychiatrist told him was post-traumatic stress disorder. He was, by his own admission, an emotional wreck—clinically depressed, barely able to sleep, and haunted by nightmares and flashbacks in which he relived violent incidents. "I was non-functional," he recalls. "I couldn't go to work. I was having anxiety attacks. I'd be sitting still and my heartbeat would suddenly go to 140 per minute."

Since then, he has conducted a personal crusade to ensure that other guards do not end up like he did. Doucette has badgered Correctional Services Canada for improved employee assistance programs to deal with job-related stress. And in early 1995, he convinced the organization to set up self-help discussion groups on a trial basis in three Kingston area prisons—Millhaven Institution, Collins Bay Penitentiary and Prison For Women. The program, currently nearing completion and being evaluated by Correctional Services officials, involved about a dozen guards from each institution. Each group held eight three-hour meetings, under the supervision of a psychologist, and individual officers discussed the impact that violence had had on them.

Doucette and many other participants want the program set up permanently but say that Corrections officials are resisting because they fear it could potentially lead to a raft of workers' compensation or disability insurance claims. "There's some real discomfort with opening up this giant morass, and uncovering the impact on people's lives, without having the proper tools to manage it," says Julia Hobson, principal of CSC's Regional Correctional Staff College in Kingston, where prison officers receive their training.

Many guards say that their job can involve long stretches of tedious supervision of inmates, interrupted by brief but traumatic incidents, which has been confirmed by one of the few Canadian studies on correctional officers. Lois Rofine, chief psychologist at a treatment centre for federal and provincial inmates in Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., found that a third of 122 correctional officers from six Ontario institutions whom she interviewed in 1992 had been on duty during a hostage-taking incident. Almost half had dealt with inmate murders and more than half with suicides, while close to two-thirds had experienced riots. Rofine also found that 20 of the officers, or 17 per cent, suffered from post-traumatic stress.

A similar study of firefighters—another high-stress occupation—in Toronto between 1990 and 1992 revealed that 16 per cent of the participants were diagnosed with the same disorder. Psychologist Wayne Cornell of the University of Ottawa medical school says that because firefighters are usually the quickest to respond to 911 calls, they are frequently exposed to gruesome or tragic events. Many firefighters reported that the death of a family member was less disturbing than witness-



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ing scenes of murder or suicide. Adds Rofine: "We're much more able to deal with acts of God than violence perpetrated by another human being."

Over the past decade, Correctional Services has developed programs to alleviate the impact of violence on employees. After every serious incident the officers involved are supposed to participate in a debriefing session, supervised by a psychologist, in which they discuss their roles and their emotions. As well, outside counselling is available, through the employee assistance program for problems such as substance abuse, marital breakdown and stress, however, Ronald Fairley, CSC's Ontario regional spokesman, said the organization does not disclose how many employees require counselling or require leaves of absence.

But some union officials say that existing programs are heavily used. Alain Rancourt, Saskatchewan regional vice-president with the Union of Solicitor-General Employees, which represents federal correctional officers and other staff, said that almost one-quarter of his 450 members use the employee assistance program annually. As well, nearly 10 per cent of the officers at Saskatchewan Penitentiary are currently on long-term leaves—mostly due to stress, he said.

According to Doucette, debriefing sessions are useful for younger guards. In his opinion, they become less effective and emotional breakdowns begin to occur after repeated exposure to bloodshed. "Over the years, you tend to numb this stuff out," he said. "You have this little drawer in your mind where you put all these incidents and you get on with your business. What happens is the drawer gets full and won't stay closed any more."

In Doucette's case, previous incidents began spilling out, and playing like a film in his mind, after an extraordinary outburst of violence at Millhaven Institution during the winter of 1993-1994. There were two murders, numerous stabbings and beatings, and six riots. As a member of the prison's emergency response team, Doucette had to show up at every incident, wearing a bulletproof flak jacket, armed with a shield and baton, and protected by a helmet with a visor.

Putting down a riot was like trying to restore order in a war zone. "The first thing the inmates do is wire the doors to their range shut and push washers and dryers in front of them," he recalls. "They trash the lights, so everything is pitch dark, and there's water running everywhere. The inmates are armed with knives and spears. They're throwing glass jars at the door or jars full of urine while we're trying to cut the wires and get the barricades open. Once you've got a little space you put some gas in and take the front ground. As soon as you've got room to manoeuvre you put some gas farther down the range and you retake it one foot at a time. It's creepy when you see inmates moving around in the dark, armed and sometimes wearing balaclavas."

After dealing with a riot or a murder, Doucette recalls, it was impossible to go home and behave like a normal husband or father. "Your wife says 'Do you want to go to the mall?' or 'How was your day?' and I'd say 'My day was fine.' But I'd put my feelings in that little drawer because she wasn't going to understand how my day was."

Some officers say that prolonged exposure to extreme violence has seriously damaged their personal lives. Rod Nellis, age 44, a guard at Millhaven for 21 years, participated in one of the peer self-help groups to deal with unresolved emotional turmoil dating back a decade or more. He said that in the mid-1980s his marriage broke up and he received psychiatric counselling for two years because he could no longer cope with the almost daily violence in a unit reserved for Ontario's most troubled inmates. Nellis said that he frequently found himself standing at his kitchen window, staring at nothing for hours at a time. He couldn't sleep more than three hours a night, and he had a recurring nightmare. "I'd be at the head of a range that was smoky and hazy and really confusing," he says. "There were lots of people, and lots of action, then I'd have this arm come up behind me and slit my throat."

Some officers are unable to shake off the effects of an especially violent incident. John Gabriel, a 45-year-old resident of Springhill, N.S., became a guard in 1972. He was working at New Brunswick's Dorchester Institution, a maximum security prison, in 1976 when three armed inmates held him and a prisoner hostage for 27 hours and threatened to cut off their heads and penises. He says he has had nightmares and flashbacks ever since. After transferring to a minimum security institute in Springhill in 1985, he found himself two years later face-to-face with one of his abductors. Gabriel said that he left his job on doctor's orders in early 1995, due to medical and emotional problems that he says were caused by the trauma of being held hostage.

Many guards concede that Correctional Services has made major strides over the past decade in recognizing and dealing with the fallout from exposure to violence. But some of those who participated in the peer discussion groups say that simply being able to talk about their experiences was very beneficial. "People let emotions out that they had kept bottled up for a long time," says Nellis. "For me, it reinforced the idea that I wasn't alone. When you came out, it was like you'd taken a load off your shoulders." And that, they say, is much better than the alternatives—the nightmares, flashbacks and sleepless nights that often result from working in some of Canada's most violent prisons. □

Counselling is available after serious incidents



Guard and riot damage at Manitoba's Headingley jail. Impact of violence

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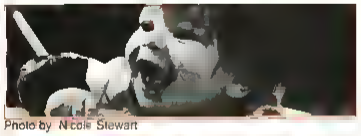
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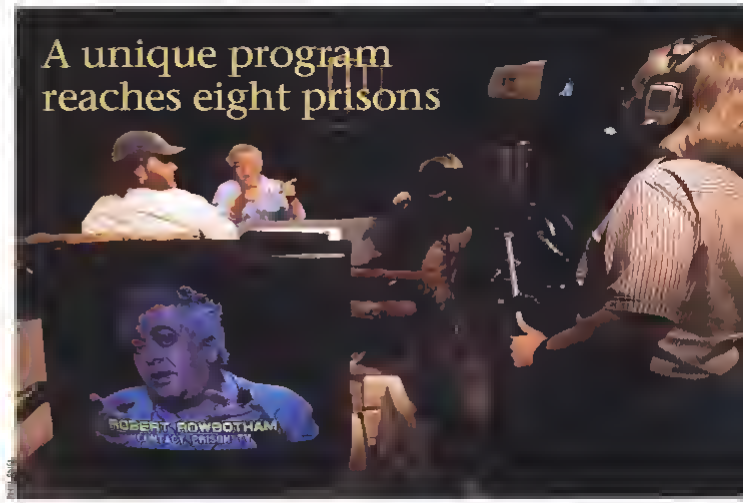
TV by cons, for cons

In the drafty TV studio of Cablenet 13 in Kingston, Ont., jailed marijuana smuggler Robert (Rosie) Rowbotham offers plain high-school gym chairs to paroled heroin traffickers Johnny Woods and Hank Lassman. Around them technicians assemble a wooden set with duct tape, building a replica of a prison cell. They don't have much time. In two hours, a guard will take Rowbotham back to Pittsburgh Institution, the jail 20 km north of Kingston where he is serving a 35-year sentence. Cameraman Don Presby has already done his time, also for drug offences. In the control room, executive producer Brian Judge, the only "straight john" (non-convict) in the team, issues a standby alert to the crew, then Rowbotham goes to work. "Hi, Rosie Rowbotham here, your host for *Contact TV*," he says to the camera. "Thanks again for letting us into your cells and living rooms."

Tonight's topic, how heroin kingpins did their time, kicked dependence and went straight, is standard true-crime TV fodder. But on this show, criminals not only answer the questions—they ask them, too. *Contact Prison TV* is North America's only prisoner-run public television show, reaching a potential audience of 48,000 homes, prison lounges and cells in and around Kingston. In its five years, the hour-long, live show has won acclaim and generated controversy inside and outside the area's eight federal jails.

The show looks at issues in the justice and penal systems. One night, lawyer Tony Bryant of killer Paul Bernardo's defence team and *Toronto Star* reporter Nick Pron, author of the Bernardo book *Lethal Marriage*, examined the sentences of Bernardo and his ex-wife, Karla Homolka, both now jailed in Kingston. On another show Wilbe Gibbs, chairman of the National Parole Board of Canada, answered live phone calls. And Rowbotham opened this season by bringing Pittsburgh's warden, Larry Stebbins, onto the show.

Rowbotham, 46, is in his second year as host. His CV, crammed with experience and contacts in Canada's underworld and justice system, would not land him many jobs. But it is perfect for this one. In the early 1970s, the Belleville, Ont., native rose to prominence by importing grass and hashish, rock singers and Vietnam draft dodgers into a Toronto scene centred on the famous hippy highrise, Rochdale College. Rowbotham was arrested in 1974 and, despite a courtroom plea on his behalf by writer Norman Mailer, was convicted in 1977 of conspiracy to import $1 million worth of marijuana and hash. "I cannot be rehabilitated," Rowbotham told the court. He spoke the truth. Two years after his release in 1980, he was re-arrested on another charge of conspiracy to import. That time, rocker Neil Young testified for Rowbotham, again to no avail.



Rowbotham hosting **Contact Prison TV:** *the same rush as putting a drug deal together*

Convicted in 1985, he won an appeal but finally lost in 1989 and got 17 years, the longest sentence in Canadian history for a marijuana offense. A subsequent appeal reduced it to 13. Then in 1994, a judge gave him another 18 years for trafficking. "Rosie's a wild man," says Richard Stratton, a writer sent to Toronto in the early 1970s by the U.S. rock magazine *Rolling Stone* to do a story on Rowbotham. Stratton never filed it. Instead, he ended up as Rowbotham's smuggling partner, and served six years in jail. "He's always been plugged into the culture: sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll," says Stratton. "He's a natural for show business."

Life is monotonous in a two-by-two-metre cell, so prisoner 304462A welcomes the TV rush. "It's the same as putting a scam together," Rowbotham says. "You know something in the Middle East, and Customs and Excise, and pirates, police, the oceans, DEA, CIA, FBI, RCMP—it was quite a scenario and you had to plan it. And now, I'm seeing that the media could be the same way."

Under its previous host, Toronto bank robbery mastermind Richard Atkinson, *Contact TV* won the cable station's award as "best live show." But Corrections Canada shut the show down in 1994 after it aired infamous footage of male riot police roughly subduing inmates and cutting off their underwear during a disturbance at the Prison for Women. Last year, prison officials allowed the show back on the air with Rowbotham as host, but scaled back to a half-hour, taped format. This season, it is back to a five hour, watched by large numbers of both inmates and prisons employees. "It has trained some inmates about media and got some people in the public informed about correctional issues," says Jim Blackler, warden at Millhaven maximum security prison who approved the show and nurtured it through its first two years when he was warden at Joyceville Institution. "How can you knock that?"

Along with TV, Rowbotham has teamed up with his old smuggling partner as Canadian managing director of Stratton's New York-based, 25,000-circulation magazine *Prison Life*. "I gave him an in on the drug world," says Rowbotham, "and he's giving me an in on the media world." Rowbotham hopes to win parole in a year or two. But he is not sitting around waiting—he is seizing the media as his new mind-altering tool.

PETER KUITENBROUWER *in Kingston*

Back to the Bible's beginning

BY SHARON DOYLE DRIEDGER

God saw everything that He had made, and indeed, it was very good.—Genesis 1 31
And the Lord was sorry that He had made humankind on earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the Lord said, 'I will blot out from the earth the human beings I have created—people together with animals and creeping things and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I made them.' But Noah found favor in the sight of the Lord.—Genesis 6·6



PHOTO BY SUSAN MCLEAN'S

Armstrong, detail from 17th-century vision of Noah's ark: stories of the 'yes-man' Noah and the 'stooge' Adam should be read like a poem

A pious Bible reader pondering the story of Noah and the flood might excuse God's desire to punish a sinful world But not Karen Armstrong In her provocative new book—which takes its title, *In the Beginning*, from the first three words of Genesis—the former Roman Catholic nun condemns God's "monstrous" destruction of the human race "It is hard to feel that the deity of the flood is anything but evil," writes Armstrong The author of the 1994 best-seller *A History of God* probes for the motivation behind the "cruel massacre " Did God lose control of his creation, she asks? Or was the "divine mercilessness" the whim of an "immature" God After all, claims Armstrong, it was God who created the "evil inclination" in the hearts of human beings "At best the God of the flood can be seen to behave like a petulant child who is tired of the castle he has created with his building blocks and knocks it down," she concludes The no-nonsense 51-year-old British writer takes Noah to task for his lack of compassion The man who built the ark, she observes, was a "yes-man " Instead of pleading the case of his fellow human beings who were drowning all around him, "Noah simply did what he was told, asked no questions and saved his own skin "

Armstrong has a way with the Word *In the Beginning* is a lively, often irreverent interpretation of the familiar stories of Genesis—one that challenges conventional notions of God and the heroes of the Bible It is also part of a surprising surge of interest in the first book of the Bible More than a dozen books on Genesis have appeared in recent months. The ancient text is also the focus of a 10-part TV series currently running on PBS In each weekly episode of *Genesis: A Living Conversation*, journalist Bill Moyers, a former Baptist minister, leads a diverse group of clergymen, writers and artists—Jews, Christians, Muslims as well as nonbelievers—in an hour-long discussion of a Genesis story "There were sharp clashes and differences of opinions," says Armstrong, who appears in one of the instalments

But, beyond the babel, many of the voices in this mini revival agree that Genesis is most relevant when it is read as a literary—not a literal—work The scientific bias of Western culture, argues Armstrong, has led many to look for absolute, historical truth in the pages of the Bible "Some believe that God really did make the world in six days," she says "What we need to understand is that the Bible does not present its truth to us in this way." Armstrong—and others, including Jack Miles, author of this year's Pulitzer Prize-winning *God: A Biography*—examine Genesis as a human drama, with God as the central character, and a ragged cast of mortals in supporting roles. "These are literary tales of a high order," says Armstrong 'Reading it demands the same kind of meditative and intuitive attention that we give to a poem "

Armstrong explains that, as in a novel or a poem, the meaning of Genesis emerges from questioning the characters' actions and motives and relating them to the current problems of human existence In many cases, Armstrong says, that will mean "taking the biblical characters off their pedestals." Abraham, she observes, is a "ruthless" father ready to sacrifice his son at the behest of his God; Adam, "a stooge" who lets Eve do all the talking, then blames her when things go wrong "They are flawed human beings," she says, "not like the Catholic saints I read about as a child who were impossibly perfect and boring They are, like ourselves, struggling human beings "

The stories of Genesis, Armstrong argues, speak as immediately to today's readers as they did to the biblical authors' first audience But some experts caution that, by emphasizing the stories—and discounting the history, language and culture from which they arose—Armstrong and other popularizers of Genesis are overlooking an important dimension of the text. "How can we presume to read the Bible unless we first place ourselves in that ancient culture and understand it?" asks Sterling Bjorndahl, a professor of religious studies at Augustana University College in Camrose, Alta. "Otherwise all we are doing is imposing our own value systems on a work that is as alien as we can imagine " And

A resurgence of interest in Genesis features an approach that is more literary than literal

others, of course, prefer to read the Bible within the framework of their faith. "Sometimes when people look at it in a literary way," says Russell Sketchley, a 34-year-old systems analyst who leads a weekly Christian Bible study group in Halifax, "they ignore the fact that some people believe this is also the word of God "

It is unclear whether Armstrong's words will fall on fertile ground With church and Sunday school attendance down, Bible literacy is also low "There is a lot of superficial knowledge of the Bible out there," says Bjorndahl Many adults learned about Adam and Eve and Noah as children, he notes, but "there are a lot of stories that never get taught in Sunday school " But at the same time, sales of the Good Book are soaring Early this month, a cover story in the U S-based book trade magazine *Publishers' Weekly* described "an elephantine Bible market that keeps getting bigger." Some observers suggest that North Americans, disenchanted with New Age pursuits, are seeking a more authentic form of spiritual nourishment in sacred scripture "More people are realizing that angels and channelling are rather thin and shallow," suggests James Lindenberger, who teaches a course on Genesis at the Vancouver School of Theology "The flow is not so much back to organized religion but to a fascination with the biblical story, especially the book of Genesis because there is nothing thin and shallow there."

Genesis encompasses the grandeur and the misery of the human condition The opening 11 chapters trace the origins of the universe from a "formless void" to the creation of Adam and Eve, their expulsion from the Garden of Eden, Cain and Abel and the first murder, Noah and the flood and the Tower of Babel The longer second part, 39 chapters sometimes called the "patriarchal tales," begins with God's promise to Abraham: "I will make of you a great nation," then follows the divine-human relationship through generations of his descendants, ending with Joseph's return from exile in Egypt.

The sacred text, originally written in Hebrew, is an important part of Jewish and Christian scriptures, forming the first book of the Old Testament and the first of the five books of the Torah Similar stories appear in the Koran, Islam's holy book. "Genesis 1 to 11 precedes all history," says Walter Vogels, a Catholic priest and author of several books on the Bible "They do not speak about Jews, they do not speak about Christians—they speak about humanity The texts are deep reflections on our human nature—that's why they are so rich and beautiful."

Like Jacob and the mysterious angel, Armstrong has wrestled with God from the day she joined the Society of the Holy Child Jesus in Sussex, England, in 1962, at the age of 17 But there was little time to think about Genesis when she was in the convent. The young nun's visions of religious transformation were quickly wiped out in the daily grind of scrubbing convent floors "The idea was you would be involved in manual labor to free your mind for communing with God, but all it did was drive me into a state of hury." Armstrong left the church after leaving the convent in 1969 Twelve years later, she published her first book, *Through the Narrow Gate*, a critical account of life in the convent. "Catholics in England don't like me," she admits "They see me as a runaway nun washing out Catholic dirty linen in public "

But Armstrong never lost her fascination with the spiritual "Homo sapiens is always Homo religiosus," says the author of numerous books and producer of several documentaries about Christianity, Judaism and Islam Still, with no wish to rejoin a church, she continues to refine her portrait of God Hers is not "the nice, cozy Daddy in the sky" she once believed in God, says Armstrong, is "a reality that one encounters in the depth of oneself " The God who is centre stage at the creation in Genesis "finally disappears from the world," she notes. "Joseph and his brothers have no appearances of God and are left like us, having to rely on their own dreams and insights But that is the nature of our experience of the sacred—it's fragmentary, confused and ambiguous."

Armstrong's reading of the Bible will shock some traditional Christians "To talk critically about God as a character in a story may be hard for some conservative readers of the Bible to take," says Robert Polzin, professor of comparative literature and religion at Ottawa's Carleton University, noting that it has always been part of the Jewish tradition to question the Bible "This approach is strange to some people," says Polzin "But it is also exciting and intriguing, because the character of God in the Bible has been almost untouchable." And endlessly debatable When it comes to Genesis, Armstrong states, "Nobody is allowed to have the last word " □

People

Edited by
BARBARA WICKENS

He shoots! He scores!

As a young man dreaming of being a jet fighter pilot, Capt. **Steve Nierlich**, 29, never dared imagine leading Canada to victory over the best the U.S. air force has to offer. But at the biennial William Tell aerial combat competition late last month—pitting one Canadian team against six from the United States—the Toronto-born Nierlich did just that. He took the title of Top Gun, for "killing" the most targets in the shortest time in mock air-to-air competition at Tyndall air force base in Florida. And the Canadian team won six of the 11 events—for Canada's first victory in 40 years of competition. Nierlich says the win is especially satisfying because the Canadian Forces' CF-18 Hornets are technologically inferior to the American aircraft. "We used what we had to our best," he adds, "and we ended up beating them by a wide margin. It feels good!"



Nierlich: 'We used what we had to our best'

DNDC/CANAPRESS



Broadfoot: 'What would Bobby Clobber do?'

EPIC ARTISTS MANAGEMENT

The Broadfoot crusade

After 45 years in show business, comedian **Dave Broadfoot** is still going strong. On Nov. 10, CBC TV is honoring that accomplishment with *Dave Broadfoot: Old Enough to Say What I Want*, a one-hour comedy special featuring his trademark mix of political satire and observational humor. The special, produced by his former *Royal Canadian Air Farce* colleagues **Roger Abbott** and **Don Ferguson**, includes current material as well as clips dating back to the 1950s, when Broadfoot, now 70, appeared on the *Ed Sullivan Show* and was a regular in a popular annual theatrical review called *Spring Thaw*. And of course no Broadfoot special would be complete without the Member for Kicking Horse Pass, a character Broadfoot created in 1954, the incoherent hockey player Big Bobby Clobber, created in 1959 after he heard a **Gordie Howe** interview on radio, and the Mounties' favorite Mountie, Staff Sgt. Renfrew. Renfrew began life as a corporal in 1957, but the RCMP has promoted him three times, most recently in July at a ceremony in Fredericton. Broadfoot says he has no plans to retire those characters. "**Adrienne Clarkson** once told me that she sometimes thinks, 'What would Bobby Clobber do in this situation?' " says Broadfoot. As for his own retirement, he has no plans there either, saying, "I figure I'm about halfway through."



Haverland: 'a funny thing'

PETER SNELL/MILLAN'S

Into the spotlight

Singer/songwriter **Kelita Haverland** just may be the best-kept secret in Canadian country music. Haverland, 38, is hardly a household name, but during her 13-year career she has shared the stage with country music greats **Reba McEntire**, **Randy Travis** and Canada's **Michelle Wright**, and co-written two songs on **Susan Aglukark**'s highly successful CD, *This Child*. Now Haverland, who was born in Claresholm, Alta., and lives in Mississauga, Ont., has just released her third album, *Lucky Ones*. "The music business is a funny thing," she says. "As for the spotlight, it can come at any moment."

Back to the trenches

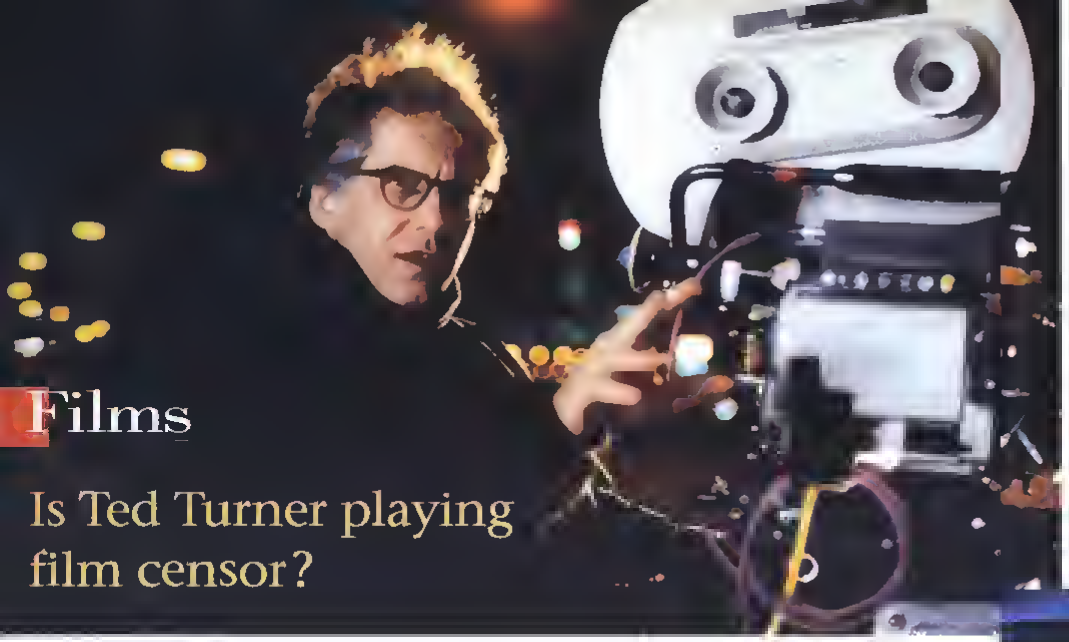
As a magazine writer and editor—and a typical baby boomer—**Stephen O'Shea** was firmly focused on current events. But after accompanying a friend to the former Somme battlefield in France in 1986, the Toronto-born O'Shea, 40, became fascinated by the First World War and its subsequent impact. He has since walked all 750 km of the Western Front, the deadly line of trenches that stretched from the English Channel through Belgium and France to Switzerland. Now living in Paris where he subtitles movies, O'Shea recounts his experiences in *Back to the Front*. "I am not a war geek," says O'Shea, distancing himself from those drawn to the bloodier aspect of military history. "But the land is still scarred, and I wanted to explore what that means for us today."



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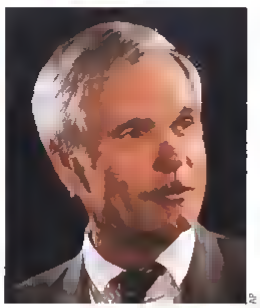
Films

Is Ted Turner playing film censor?

Waiting for *Crash*

BY BRIAN D. JOHNSON

Ever since it was launched at the Cannes International Film Festival last May, leaving an audience of the world's most jaded filmgoers dazed and confused, David Cronenberg's *Crash* has been on a collision course with controversy. Splitting the jury at Cannes, it came away with an unprecedented prize for "audacity, originality and daring." *Crash*, a tale of characters who get their sexual kicks from car accidents, went on to become a box-office smash last summer in France. It has also made an impressive dent in Canada, racking up $1.3-million in damage at the box office in just one month. But in the United States, *Crash* appears to have hit a serious roadblock—in the form of media mogul Ted Turner.



Turner; Cronenberg (top): doubts about U.S. screenings

Cronenberg told *Maclean's* last week that Turner saw the film and was so outraged by it that he halted its American release. The U.S. distributor of *Crash* is Fine Line Features, a division of New Line Cinema—a part of the Turner empire, which recently merged with Time-Warner Inc. Originally, Fine Line's U.S. release of *Crash* was timed to coincide with its October release in Canada. But last June, amid reports that Turner found the film repulsive and wanted to bury it, Cronenberg learned that Fine Line was pushing back the release to next spring. And now, despite reassurances from Fine Line that the film is set to open in U.S. theatres in March, he says, "I'm still worried that it will not be released at all. And the delay has already done hideous damage to the film. We've lost the momentum we'd built up from Cannes."

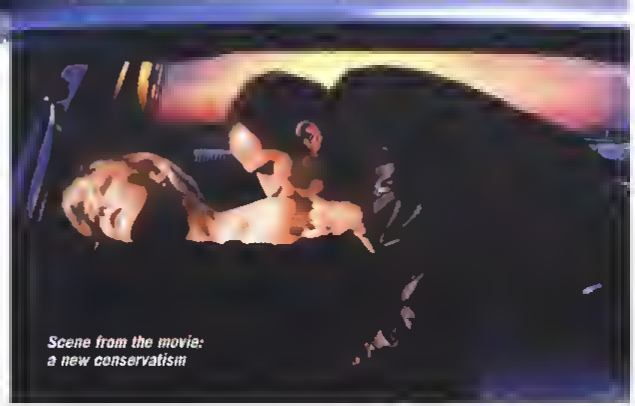
Stories of Turner's interference with *Crash* have been circulating through the industry since June. Last month, Cronenberg finally talked to a New Line executive who, the director says, privately confirmed that Turner's outraged response to *Crash* was in fact the reason for the delay. "He said all the rumors were true," Cronenberg recalls. "He said Turner was morally offended and worried about copycat incidents." The notion that viewers might get behind the wheel and act out *Crash* scenarios on the open road strikes Cronenberg as absurd. "I can't imagine what Turner is thinking," he says. "Is he worried that people are going to masturbate in their cars and smash into one another? Or that they're going to take long, lingering car washes with their girlfriends ... or *what*?" Turner was unavailable for an interview last week, and a representative at his Atlanta headquarters declined to comment.

The obstacles encountered by *Crash* point to a larger trend. As Christian conservatism gains ground in the United States, and media conglomerates swallow up independent production companies, the future of tough, provocative films is becoming increasingly precarious. After Disney's takeover of Miramax Films two years ago, Miramax executives discovered they no longer had the freedom to release films with an NC-17 rating—ones restricted to an adult audience. And Turner has squelched plans to air *Bastard Out of Carolina*, a searing drama about child sexual abuse directed by Anjelica Huston and commissioned by the Turner Broadcasting System. "I think it's very ominous," says Cronenberg. "Miramax has been Disneyfied, and New Line has been Turnerized."

Cronenberg's concerns are echoed by many of his colleagues. "It is censorship in the worst possible way," says Bingham Ray, a senior executive at October Films, the largest truly independent U.S. film company, whose fall releases include the Cannes award winners *Secrets and Lies* and *Breaking the Waves*. "What happened with *Crash*," adds Ray, "is that there's one individual and his wife [Jane Fonda] who took exception to this film and said, 'No way, we're not putting our name on it.' We would love to have distributed that film. I think it has 'hit' written all over it."

Fine Line president Ruth Vitale, who is based in New York City, told *Maclean's* that the company fully intends to release *Crash* in March. "The movie is outrageous and wonderful," she says. "It deserves time. There's about 40 films being released from now until the end of the year—it's the most crowded marketplace—and there's no need to jam *Crash* into a space just to cram it in. *Crash* has enough of its own buzz to hold until March, when it could really perform and realize its potential."

Another Fine Line executive recently told *The Hollywood Reporter*, a trade paper, that *Crash* does not need to open in the fall because it is not an Academy Award contender. "That annoys me no end," says Cronenberg. "David Lynch got a nomination for directing *Blue Velvet*, which was a big shock because it was such an extreme film." He adds that director Paul Schrader, who wrote *Taxi Driver*, said it was "the best-directed film he had ever seen, and Bernardo Bertolucci [*Last Tango in Paris*] told me it was a religious masterpiece. So that's two votes right there—and I'd vote for it."



Scene from the movie: a new conservatism

Meanwhile, Cronenberg remains skeptical about Fine Line's commitment to release the movie in March. "I'm still not convinced," he says. "They've also denied that Ted Turner had anything to do with the release schedule, and I know that to be a lie. Turner's rancor about the film is deep, and it's not a money thing because the movie has proved it can make money." The *Crash* cast is very upset by the delay," he adds. Holly Hunter has called Turner's treatment of the film an act of "cultural fascism."

Casting further uncertainty over the release are reports that Time-Warner is seeking to sell both New Line and Fine Line. "Basically, we feel that New Line executives are no longer in control," says Cronenberg. "Now, they're serving two masters: Time-Warner and Turner. They're in an untenable position. And it seems to be getting more untenable by the minute. They don't know where they're going to be, and they're putting on a brave front."

If and when *Crash* hits U.S. theatres, Fine Line has agreed that it should carry an NC-17 rating, which cuts off access to some major advertising outlets, theatres and video chains. Cronenberg cut a version for Blockbuster Video that would comply with an American R-rating (permissible for children accompanied by adults). "But part of it was an experiment to see what the R-rated version would look like," he says. "It's 10 full minutes shorter. And that doesn't make any sense to me." Adds the director: "The NC-17 rating carries a stigma that is completely undeserved. But if you want an R-rating, you have to consider that a five-year-old can see it."

Crash is not the only Canadian movie that has run into trouble with the American rating system. Last year, the Motion Picture Association of America, the ratings umpire, asked Toronto director Patricia Rozema to make cuts to her lesbian romance *When Night is Falling*, to avoid the NC-17 brand. "If it were a heterosexual love story, they wouldn't have thought twice about it," says Rozema, recalling her negotiations with the MPAA. But, to avoid appearing homophobic, the MPAA focused on the movie's one heterosexual love scene, she says. "It was a hilarious process where they tried to indicate what they found offensive—you can only have a certain number of thrusts." In the end, Rozema declined to make the cuts and her U.S. distributor, October Films, released the movie unrated.

The moral context for sexual content carries significant weight in the eyes of the MPAA, according to Rozema. "Even *Basic Instinct* could be tolerated to a greater degree because it was a cautionary tale of vicious killer dykes, whereas the entire context of my film is that these were regular folks and that love was a beautiful thing."

As Rozema's distributor, Ray deplores his country's double standard for sex and violence. "We live in a culture that celebrates violence, and tolerates it," he says. "But sex tends to scare people. It's OK to put a gun to a woman's head in a movie advertisement, but to touch a woman's breast is taboo. And I think that's sick."

October Films has released several NC-17 films, including Abel Ferrara's 1995 vampire movie, *The Addiction*. And it had to make a cut to avoid an NC-17 for *Breaking the Waves*, Danish director Lars von Trier's's brilliant melodrama about a disabled oilrig worker who drives his bride to sexual degradation. The movie contains a brutal rape scene. But all the MPAA wanted cut, says Ray, was a tender moment between the newlyweds in which she touches his penis."

The MPAA ratings system was created by the Hollywood studios to police themselves. But as certain media titans, such as Ted Turner, take their moral leadership to heart, there may be less and less room for disturbing content in film and television. Last year, Disney demanded that Miramax make cuts to *Kids*, an acclaimed movie about teenage sexuality, before finally allowing its subsidiary to release it through another company altogether. And, according to the show business bible *Variety*, Turner is obstructing even international sales of Huston's *Bastard Out of Carolina*, which contains graphic scenes of child rape and repeated physical abuse.

Meanwhile, Cronenberg, a mild-mannered provocateur from a mild-mannered nation, has confounded an American mogul's code of cinematic decency with one the most provocative films of the decade. Canada has been importing screen violence from the United States for years. By exporting sex, if the gods see fit, perhaps it can improve the balance of trade. □



Danes, DiCaprio: passion amid a gangland Verona

FILMS

Souping up the Bard

Shakespeare is Hollywood's latest hot ticket

BY BRIAN D. JOHNSON

He is Hollywood's hottest screenwriter. His movies deal with murder, gang war, illicit romance, lethal drugs and women in drag. And he writes in a flamboyant style that can shift from screwball comedy to blood-drenched drama in a twinkling. No, not Quentin Tarantino. William Shakespeare.

He has been dead for four centuries, but three movies based on his work are playing in theatres this month—*William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet*, *Looking for Richard* and *Twelfth Night*. A fourth, a marathon version of *Hamlet* by British actor-director Kenneth Branagh, is due out by Christmas. Shakespeare has faded in and out of cinematic fashion since the silent era. But perhaps more than anyone, Branagh has helped make the Bard a Hollywood player for the Nineties. With his frolicsome (and profitable) *Much Ado About Nothing* (1993), he put the showbiz back into Shakespeare—championing the idea that a 400-year-old play could be loads of fun, and instantly accessible. "None of these films would be happening without the success of *Much Ado*," says Trevor Nunn, the British director of *Twelfth Night*.

But the latest Shakespeare films go even further to breathe fresh life into Elizabethan drama. Australian director Baz Luhrmann sets his exhilarating *Romeo and Juliet* among street gangs packing semi-automatic weapons on a honky-tonk strip called Verona Beach. With *Looking for Richard*—a dazzling mosaic of comic documentary and dramatic performance—actor-director Al Pacino canvasses pedestrians on the streets of Manhattan and snoops around Shakespeare's birthplace as part of an attempt to unravel *Richard III*. Nunn's decorous *Twelfth Night* is more traditional. But it, too, goes out of its way to make a cinematic splash before getting down to the business of blank verse.



Pacino: audacious labor of love

As film makers cut Shakespeare's dialogue, tart up his characters and update period settings, some scholars may take offence. But Luhrmann contends that his *Romeo and Juliet* is just the kind of movie Shakespeare might have made if he were around today. "What people forget," the director said in an interview last week, "is that Shakespeare was a relentless entertainer. When he played the Elizabethan stage, he was basically dealing with an audience of 3,000 drunken punters who were selling pigs and geese in the stalls. He played to everyone from the street sweeper to the Queen of England. And his style was to have stand-up comedy one moment, a song and then the highest tragedy right next to it." Adds Luhrmann: "He was a rambunctious, sexy, violent, entertaining storyteller, and we've tried to be all those things."

William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet—which could just as easily be called *Baz Luhrmann's Romeo and Juliet*—is a luscious, balletic, candy-colored spectacle. With switchblade editing, Luhrmann cuts his way through jittery, fast-food sequences—*Miami Vice* meets *West Side Story* in duels of drawn guns and screeching tires. Then, he steps on the brakes, drops all the postmodern razzmatazz and lets the drama relax into deliciously tender, languorous love scenes between his two captivating young stars, Leonardo Di Caprio and Claire Danes.

Luhrmann, who made his name with the stylized dance fable *Strictly Ballroom* (1992), employs a visual flair that is occasionally too slick, too gimmicky—or just downright exhausting. But it is never dull. His gaudy, gangland Verona Beach is a Fellinesque carnival of extremes, with obvious allusions to riottorn Miami and Los Angeles. In fact, the movie was filmed in Mexico, and icons of Mexican folklore, glow-in-the-dark Madonnas and neon crucifixes are ubiquitous.

This neo-*Romeo* customizes Shakespeare's tragedy. But tongue-in-cheek, it also toys with anachronism at every turn. The prologue, which introduces the tale of "star-crossed lovers," is voiced by a TV anchorwoman reading the news in iambic pentameter. When gang members draw their chrome pistols, we hear the scrape of swords being unsheathed. Before attending the ball where he first meets Juliet, Romeo drops a tab of acid. His best friend, Mercutio (Harold Perrineau), is a black transvestite who dances at the ball in a silver-sequined miniskirt and bra.

The feuding Capulet and Montague families meanwhile are corporate dynasties ruled by avaricious patriarchs—Juliet's father, Capulet (Paul Sorvino), is a classic Mafia don. Romeo's rival, Paris, graces *Time*

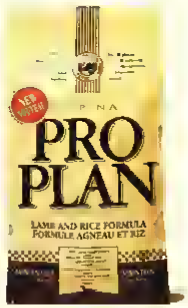


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FILMS

magazine's cover as "Bachelor of the year." The film is riddled with playful sight gags. A sign advertises Out Damned Spot Dry Cleaners. And the letter from the Friar (Pete Postlethwaite) telling Romeo about Juliet's faked death goes astray in a courier van labeled Post Post Haste Dispatch.

Luhrmann has cut Shakespeare's text by almost half. He has preserved the Elizabethan English of what remains—although there is not a plummy English accent in the cast. Nurse (Miriam Margolyes) delivers her lines with a heavy Hispanic inflection that sounds entirely appropriate. And as young actors jive through Shakespeare's verse in American accents, it is not as incongruous as it seems. "In truth," says Luhrmann, "the idea of a society where youth go around speaking in rhythm with metaphor and simile happens today in the streets of America."

Of course, the bottom line in filming *Romeo and Juliet* is the casting of the two leads. As director Franco Zeffirelli proved with his lush 1968 version, they must be young, beautiful and visibly enchanted with each other. DiCaprio and Danes more than qualify. DiCaprio has the insouciant charm of James Dean's frisky kid brother; there is sweet delinquency about him. Danes, acclaimed for her role in the short-lived TV series *My So-Called Life*, is a 17-year-old whose innocence is offset by an air of dreamy wisdom. The lovers first gaze at each other through an aquarium. They first embrace in a swimming pool. And with Luhrmann filming their love scenes in lingering close-ups, they kiss and kiss and kiss—as only young lovers do.

Looking for Richard is equally audacious. And considering just what Pacino has undertaken, his success in coming up with such a hugely entertaining movie is an even more impressive feat. Pacino had played Richard onstage. But instead of simply filming his performance, or taking it outdoors, he spent 10 years, off and on, filming his attempt to film it. Out of that obsessive labor of love, Pacino has crafted a remarkably coherent and compelling movie—a vividly annotated Shakespeare. It is as if Scarface had suddenly turned into the world's coolest English teacher.

Richard III features Shakespeare's most infamous villain, the hunchbacked conspirator who murders his way to the English throne. It is one of the Bard's most performed works, and a film version appeared just last year, with Ian McKellen playing Richard as a 20th-century fascist. But, with its convoluted string of murders, *Richard* is a difficult play. And the comedy of Pacino's film revolves around his exasperated quest to crack it. "It's very confusing," he says. "I don't know why we're even bothering to do this at all."

Over the decade of filming, Pacino is a time-lapse portrait of changing facial hair. Humming it up in his backwards baseball cap, he seems a little disingenuous as he strolls the streets, Letterman-style—a Hollywood royal asking the simple folk what they know about Shakespeare. But he is a talk-show host who pulls in some fascinating guests. Kevin Kline remembers being taken to a stuffy production of *King Lear* as a teenager and "making out with my girlfriend in the back row." Vanessa Redgrave and Kenneth Branagh plumb the secrets of iambic pentameter.



Bonham Carter: countess in a gender-bending comedy

Elizabethan fare features gang war, murder, and cross-dressers

Meanwhile, Pacino works his way through the play's major scenes, cutting between the actors thrashing out line-readings around a table to richly costumed performances. Powered by a strong cast—including Kevin Spacey, Winona Ryder and Alec Baldwin—the momentum builds, until the sinew of the play begins to emerge almost magically, from the chaos of deconstruction. The film's cut-and-thrust editing, a brilliant kind of cinematic swordplay, escalates to the climactic battle scene ("My kingdom for a horse!"). And Pacino's Shakespeare class explodes into pure movie-making. *Looking for Richard* is one of the year's best films.

Twelfth Night, a gender-bending comedy of mistaken identity, is less thrilling, although director Nunn has fashioned a handsome production. Fleshing out the play's background, he opens the film with the shipwreck in which identical twins Viola (Imogen Stubbs) and Sebastian (Stephen Mackintosh) are separated. Viola assumes her brother is dead. Washed up on an alien shore, she disguises herself as a boy, enters the service of a duke, and ends up wooing the countess Olivia (Helena Bonham Carter) on his behalf. As the romantic intrigue thickens, a slapstick power struggle ensues in Olivia's household, resulting in a humiliating prank against her ill-tempered steward, Malvolio (Nigel Hawthorne).

It is a solid, well-acted production. Bonham Carter is a serene presence. Hawthorne acts his pants off, and Ben Kingsley invests the minstrel's role with sphinxlike gravity. Placing his characters in lovely landscapes and 19th-century costumes, Nunn directs with a breezy élan that recalls Branagh's *Much Ado*. But he lacks a galvanizing performance. And this upstairs-downstairs farce, Shakespeare's most popular comedy, lacks punch. Now that gender bending has become such a sophisticated conceit in film making—with such landmarks as *Orlando*, *The Crying Game* and *M. Butterfly*—*Twelfth Night*'s fake-moustache masquerade appears awfully tame.

Still, Nunn's sunny, athletic adaptation adds to the vigorous diversity in the current crop of Shakespeare movies. Great directors, from Orson Welles to Roman Polanski, have risen to the challenge of filming Shakespeare. And after almost 400 years, the source appears inexhaustible. □

Splendor in the class

Two boys in love hurtle towards tragedy

LILIES
Directed by John Greyson

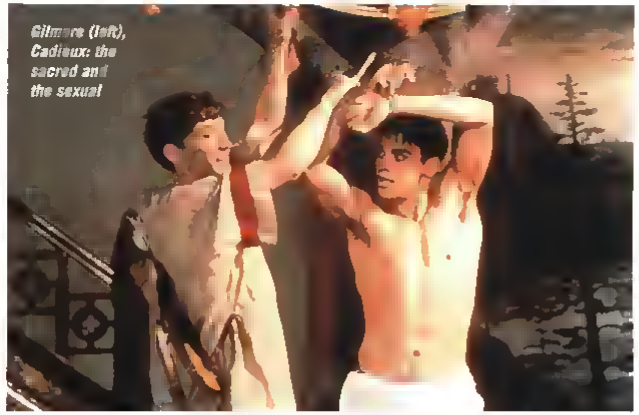
Filled with lust, madness and vengeance, all seething in a mosquito-infested northern backwater, *Lilies* could only have been set in Canada. And with Roman Catholic ardor as the fuel that heats passion to explosive levels, the movie could only have been set in francophone Quebec. The intricate structure of *Lilies* (this is a movie about a play that segues into a flashback that begins with a play) requires an inordinate degree of audience attention. That, plus the fact that the female characters are all played by men, makes for some daunting hurdles of disbelief. It is a testament to John Greyson's Genie Award-nominated direction—and to the superb acting, which won *Lilies* another four Genie citations (in all, it received a record 14)—that viewers are able to pass through the film's cross-gendered looking glass. There is nothing campy about these queens of hearts.

Based on the hit play of the same name by Michel Marc Bouchard, who also wrote the screenplay, *Lilies* begins with a visit by Bishop Jean Bilodeau (Marcel Sabourin) to a penitentiary in 1952. He is to hear the confession of an older convict, Simon (Aubert Pallascio). But instead of dispensing absolution, the bishop sees his own sins of 40 years earlier enacted. It turns out that Jean and Simon knew each other as teenagers in the village of Roberval, where they attended the same Catholic boys' school—and were part of a homosexual love triangle that came to a horrific end. Simon turns the confession into an act of "revenge and sacrilege," forcing Jean to watch as other prisoners and some co-operative guards stage the events of the past in the prison chapel.

The "play" begins with two inmates portraying the young Simon (Jason Cadieux) and his schoolmate Vallier (Danny Gilmore) as they rehearse a highly eroticized play about the torture of St. Sebastian. With the same actors, the movie shifts back and forth between the prison and the real-life settings of the school and Roberval. Simon and Vallier are in love, but when another student, the young Jean Bilodeau (Matthew Ferguson), finds them kissing, he threatens to expose them. It eventually becomes clear that he, too, is in love with the beautiful Simon.

The play traces Simon's estrangement from Vallier over the course of a few weeks. After Simon's father (Gary Farmer) learns of his son's homosexual tendencies and savagely whips him, Simon allows Lydie-Anne de Rozier (Alexander Chapman), an elegant visitor from Paris, to seduce him. Vallier, meanwhile, has to contend not only with rejection by Simon but also with his delusional, abandoned mother, a fallen aristocrat named Countess Marie Laure de Tilly (Brent Carver).

It is astonishing that Carver, despite his achingly human evocation of the countess, was shut out of the Genie nominations. But at least Cadieux, Gilmore, Ferguson and Chapman were recognized. Gilmore, in particular, is a wonder as the jilted Vallier. The actor's portrayal of bright-eyed youthful passion is so intense, it guarantees *Lilies* an impact that transcends sexual preference.



Gilmore (left), Cadieux: the sacred and the sexual

PATRICIA HLUCHY

Diamond-in-the-rough debut

TREES LOUNGE
Directed by Steve Buscemi

In Quentin Tarantino's *Reservoir Dogs* (1992), he was Mr. Pink, the weaselly hoodlum who refuses to tip waitresses because it's against his "principles." More recently, in the Coen brothers' *Fargo*, he was a seedy thug described by a witness as "funny-lookin'—more than most people even." Scrawny, pallid and bug-eyed, Steve Buscemi *is* funny looking. And he has come to personify the idiosyncratic slime of the pulp worlds created by Tarantino and the Coens. "It seems I always play a villainous guy, or a seedy guy or a nerdy guy," he told *Maclean's*. But last year, Buscemi shucked the sleazeball image to play a director in the hilarious spoof *Living in Oblivion*. Now, with *Trees Lounge*, he makes his own directorial debut, casting himself as a barfly who is sleazy *and* sympathetic—and showing as much finesse behind the camera as in front of it.

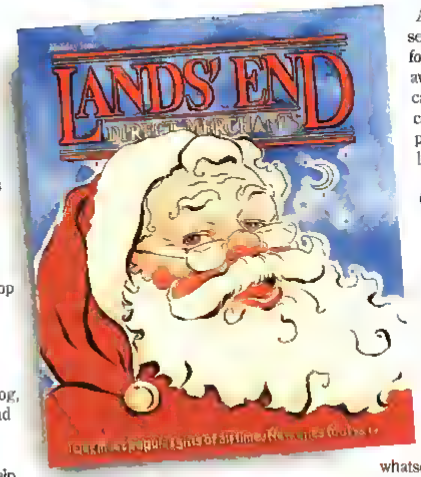
Buscemi returned to his home town of Valley Stream on Long Island, N.Y., to shoot the film. "I wrote it about what might have happened to me if I had never left," he says. Buscemi plays Tommy, an unemployed auto mechanic whose pregnant girlfriend has left him for his ex-boss. A permanent denizen of the local bar, Tommy inherits a job driving an ice-cream truck and gets dangerously involved with a nubile 17-year-old helper (Chloe Sevigny).

The working-class realism of *Trees Lounge* is rooted in the director's own experience—he once drove an ice-cream truck, and his father collected garbage. With an eye reminiscent of Cassavetes or Altman, he has cut a diamond-in-the-rough faceted with strong, true performances from a large ensemble cast. And in carving out his own character with transparent honesty, Buscemi reveals the human frailty at the heart of those nasty pulp roles.

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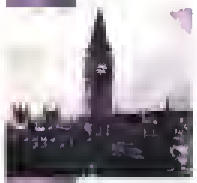
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Music

The Fab Four: an echo boom creates new millionaires

Magical megabucks tour

BY BRUCE WALLACE

It is one hour into the Magical Mystery Tour through Liverpool, and the fortysomething redhead from Atlanta in the back row of the bus is just busting to tell *somebody*. She had restricted herself to singing along softly when *Here Comes the Sun* came over the intercom. She settled for pressing her camera to the window when the bus—itself a study in muted psychedelia—paused outside Ringo Starr's boyhood home, and again as it chugged past the barbershop, the roundabout and all the rest on Penny Lane.

But when the tour pulled over at the bright red gates to the children's group home called Strawberry Fields, her restraint collapsed. Cornering the tour guide, she let it be known in a loud Georgia drawl that, while all The Beatles were obviously great, she loved John the best. Thirty-five years on, and people still feel they have to pick a favorite Beatle. "I have people cry when they get to Strawberry Fields," says Edwina Willis, 44, the guide whose own cheery enthusiasm for The Beatles gives her patience for the special needs of her customers. Besides, John is *her* favorite, too. "Some people," she adds, "kiss the gates."

Not quite the frenzy and fainting of Beatlemania, but nonetheless impressive loyalty to a band that broke up a quarter of a century ago. And The Beatles are having a *very* good year. They have sold nearly 13 million copies of the first two volumes of their *Anthology*, collections of outtakes and unreleased snippets of songs that, if not quite worth the wait musically, are at least interesting. Sales were boosted by broadcasting a sanitized history of the band to television audiences in 94 countries. And when the boorish but hugely successful British band Oasis proclaimed themselves unabashed Beatles disciples, the combined hype triggered a run on The Beatles' back catalogue, which has meant sales of another six million "units," in the parlance of the ponytails in the music industry.

Meanwhile, a longer and grittier home-video version of the documentary went on sale last week to accompany the final *Anthology* CD, from the band's autumnal years. The album contains more acoustic rough cuts, intriguing reminders of why "unplugged" is such a successful concept, and some studio kibitzing between the boys—which has a sarcastic edge, not surprising given the messy divorce coming around the corner. Although the CDs and videos are priced for affluent boomers, sales haven't suffered: this will be the single most lucrative Beatle year yet. (By comparison, in 1969, the year of *Abbey Road*, the band sold nine million albums.) After Andrew Lloyd Webber, the surviving Beatles are the richest entertainers in Britain.

The echo boom in Beatles popularity has spun off some new winners as well, notably Pete Best, the James Dean-handsome but introverted Liverpool drummer who in 1962 was unceremoniously fired in favor of Ringo on the eve of glory. One wonders what Best must have thought in the following years, as statues to his replacement were erected in his home town while he went to work at a local government employment centre. He got back into the music business in the 1980s when his half-brother, Roag, encouraged him to form The Pete Best Band. With Roag promoting and drumming alongside his front-man brother, the band played small clubs, appeared at Beatles conventions and charged the curious for interviews.

This will be the most lucrative Beatles year yet

Those days are done. Pete Best may still be destined for a footnote, but, thanks to his drumming on three early tracks included on *Anthology*, he will at least be a rich footnote. "Pete's a millionaire now," says publicist Geoff Baker at Apple. The Beat-



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les record label "This has been good for the whole extended Beatles family"

Well, not quite the entire cast. There is still much clucking of tongues in Liverpool at Cynthia Lennon's decision to come out of obscurity last year to cut a late-in life debut record. She chose to cover *Those Were the Days*, a campy gamble, but there were few takers for the remake as sung by the former art student who had been John's first wife. Cynthia's career is now on hold.

Then there is Allan Williams, the former Liverpool club owner and The Beatles' first manager, who booked the band's legendary gigs in Hamburg. The peppery Williams handed the group over to Brian Epstein in 1962 with the words "Take 'em and good riddance." Four months later, they were not just a band but a social phenomenon. Last week, Williams was on a British television show called *Dosh* (roughly "bucks"), the featured guest on a segment called *Winners and Losers*. "Guess which side they wanted me for?" he laughed in a recent interview.

Williams is known in Liverpool as the Welsh Bard, thanks to the frequency with which his sometimes aggressive manner can get him barred from nightclubs. But he can also be affable and endearing, as he was one night last week showing off the nightclub haunts of Liverpool's old warehouse district. "Oh, I used to be bitter," he says, and it's obvious how much it still hurts. He shakes his head over Cynthia's record, insisting that "you can't live off The Beatles for the rest of your life," though it sometimes seems that he's determined to try. He waged a 10-year, low-intensity legal battle with Paul McCartney over a pair of leather pants that Williams claimed the Beatle once wore on stage. McCartney succeeded in keeping Williams from auctioning the pants through Sotheby's as authentic Beatle memorabilia. Even so, "Paul's pants" still travel with Williams to Beatles conventions, where he makes money telling ribald stories about the boys' early days. (Just how bawdy depends on the age of the kids in the crowd, he says.)

Liverpool has had an ambivalent relationship with its most famous sons. "This is a hard town," says Roag Best. "Cities like Manchester have learned to work together for a common cause, but the Liverpool mentality is to watch out for the other guy 'cause he's likely to rip you off." The city does not even have a lot of Beatles fans, according to Ray Johnson, a 40-year-old who still drums in a classic-rock band and works for the company that runs the Cavern Club, where The Beatles got their start in the early '60s. "It's seen as uncool to like The Beatles, except for a few brave souls of our generation."

The Beatles' home town has hardly commercialized its heritage in a flashy way. After a failed venture in the 1980s called Beatle City, Liverpool finally got around to opening a proper Beatles museum on its spruced-up waterfront in 1990. The predictable theme bars are scattered about the city—the shelter in the middle of the roundabout has become the Sgt. Pepper Bistro, for example. But although Johnson insists that "Liverpool is Mecca for Beatles fans," fans are, in fact, more likely to make a pilgrimage to the famous crosswalk outside Abbey Road studios in London where the records were made. Liverpool is, after all, the city The Beatles left.



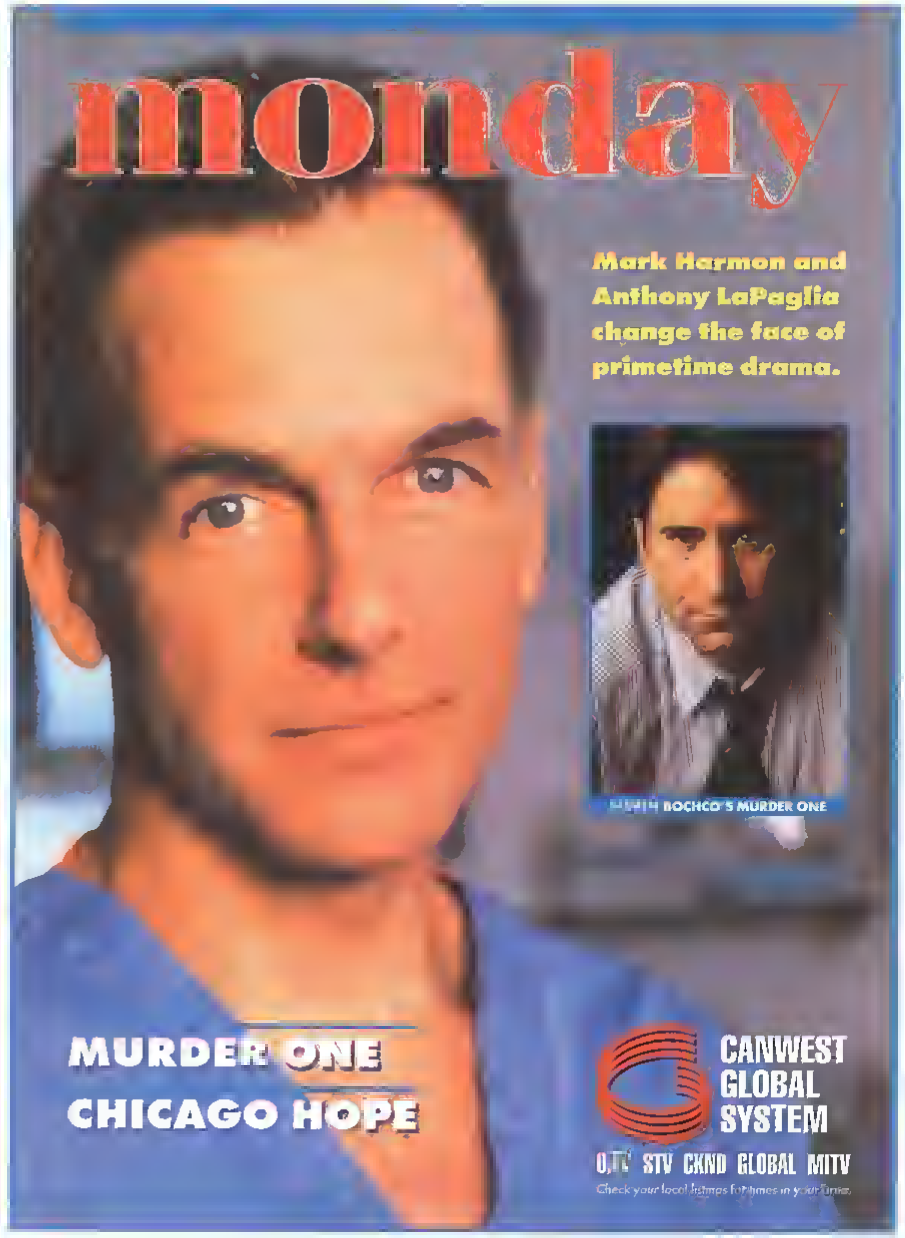
Liverpool graffiti artists: the band's home town still languishes

Most painfully, The Beatles' rise to international fame roughly coincided with Liverpool's economic fall. The grand, square-shouldered buildings that once housed shipping and insurance companies are a reminder of the days when it was a cornerstone of the British Empire. Liverpool's modern image is tied to its radical left-wing city government of the 1970s and the Toxteth riots in 1981 that burned down part of Ringo's old neighborhood. "I was shocked to discover that there is more Beatles stuff in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum in Cleveland than there is in Liverpool," says Derek Hatton, a controversial, radical left-wing councillor from that era who helped turn Liverpool into a red stain on the Tory map of Great Britain. Many Liverpudlians blame Hatton himself for leading a council that dismissed the Beatle heritage as a bourgeois indulgence. "We were never hostile to The Beatles, but there's no doubt the city would be better off if we had done more," is all Hatton will allow.

Even so, Merseyside tourism statistics show that six per cent of all visitors to Liverpool come specifically because of The Beatles—1.5 million people a year, many for the annual Beatles Festival every August. "I remember thinking how romantic it was to come to the place where The Beatles were from," recalls Mark Featherstone-Witty, 50, an energetic Londoner who moved to Liverpool six years ago to try to start up a school for the performing arts. "But this city has had tough times. The whole reason for its existence is gone, and it has got to find a new vocation."

Featherstone-Witty believes that Liverpool has to nurture strengths like its Beatles heritage. For years, he lobbied McCartney to help raise the funds needed to open the splashy Liverpool Institute for the Performing Arts in the derelict building where McCartney and George Harrison went to high school. With McCartney's backing, and under Featherstone-Witty's directorship, the school opened last June, an attempt to combine the teaching of the creative arts with hard-headed business sense.

"We get accused of living in the past, but this is our history, and it's important that we acknowledge it," agrees Johnson, back in the renovated narrow streets of the Cavern Quarter, where the young Beatles played and drank. The Cavern Club owners have big ambitions for Liverpool, including a Beatles theme hotel—"you know, like a huge yellow submarine with beds in it and you give each floor a title from a song," says Johnson. The Disneyland plan. But the charm of Liverpudlians is their very absence of slickness, the reliance on humor and scrappiness and iconoclasm that so characterized The Beatles themselves. So, perhaps, the people of Liverpool need not change their ways for, although the music has gone out to the world, they were present at its creation. □



Battlefield of the soul

War does great harm, even on the home front

YOU WENT AWAY
By Timothy Findley
(HarperCollins, 218 pages, $25)

Certain novels by Timothy Findley seem to have been inspired by a particular feeling for the past. Not the far past, but the one just a few decades out of reach—whose atmosphere still lingers in old straw hats and party dresses, stored in attic trunks, or in yellowing photographs where the eyes of the subjects almost communicate their secrets across the years. Much of the power of his 1977 novel, *The Wars*, flowed from its recreation of the ambience of the Great War. It brought the young men in khaki to life while simultaneously (and this is the essence of Findley's achievement) creating a poignant sense that time had already left them behind. Now, he has created a similar effect in *You Went Away*, a novella of the Second World War that masterfully captures the charged, unsettling atmosphere of the Canadian home front. The dislocations, fears and frustrations of a society at war are all here, wrapped in a glow, not quite nostalgic, that renders them at once vividly present and oddly far away.



Findley: capturing the unsettling atmosphere of the Second World War

Findley achieves this effect partly by ignoring the era he is in. There is nothing in *You Went Away* of the cynicism and sharp edges of contemporary society—or of the postmodernist tricks of so much of its literature. *You Went Away* is a simple story simply—almost naively—told. It embraces the more straightforward faiths and enthusiasms of 50 years ago with an uncritical eye—with the result that the struggles of its characters seem all the more touchingly human. Findley's novel may seem unsophisticated and even sentimental to some, but its aura of innocence could stand as a benchmark indicating how much more guarded society has become.

The story centres on the Forbes family, who live in upper-middle-class Toronto. On Sept. 3, 1939, all four of them—Graeme, his wife, Michael (usually called Mi), and their two children, Matthew, 8, and Bonnie, 5, are visiting Graeme's mother, Ellen, when the news comes that the war against Germany has begun. Gloom descends on everyone in the family except Graeme, who senses the start of a great adventure. A few weeks later, he celebrates by taking his family to the airport to watch the airplanes, and not long after he joins the air force. But because he is in his late 30s, he is given only desk jobs at Canadian training camps. Frustrated, he begins to drink heavily and to take up with other women. The patient Mi tries to patch things together on her all-too-brief visits to the camps, but Graeme seems perversely bent on destroying both his marriage and his career.

Like most plots, this one has been done before: the love of a good woman saves (or fails to save) a man who is not so much bad as weak. What puts *You Went Away* well beyond the hackneyed treatment this theme usually gets is Findley's extraordinary ability to suggest the depths beneath the surface of his story. His people and settings live not only because they are well observed, but because there is something hidden and potent in them, just as there would be in reality. Mi is the most attractive and best realized of his characters. She is in a sense, barely glimpsed among the very few physical clues Findley offers about her. But in the simplest of actions—such as choosing which dress she should wear to impress her philandering husband—she comes fully alive, with all her hopefulness and tired courage.

The character of Graeme, meanwhile, is a devastating portrait of a man who has gotten stuck in his own complexes. His mother has never loved him as much as his brother, Ian, who died heroically in the First World War. Invisible in his family of origin, Graeme is a prisoner of self-loathing and rage, incapable of accepting the blessing embodied by his wife and children. He becomes a kind of deadweight in the story, rapidly pulling others towards disaster. His coldness towards Matthew is painful to observe, and is certainly the main cause of his son's isolation and passivity.

Although the arc of the story is, on the whole, well-managed, there are a few scenes that soar above the rest. When Mi—who knows that her husband is having an affair—walks into a party in the officer's mess, the episode is so fraught with danger it is almost possible to smell the perfume and cigarette smoke in the charged air. In another incident, Matthew, now an adolescent, has his first, vivid sexual awakening as a passenger on a motorcycle, while hugging the body of the older man who is racing them home through a thunderstorm.

You Went Away has its flaws. Findley sometimes spoils the ends of his scenes with little melodramatic narrative flourishes—phrases designed to intensify the emotion, but which only gild the lily. And the author's romanticism emerges rather too baldly in the often overly poetic thoughts of his characters, inevitably played up in the text by italics. Yet the strength of his story is undeniable. In *You Went Away* not a shot is fired in anger. But the destructive hand of war has gripped its characters as surely as if they lived in occupied France.

JOHN BEMROSE

NBA 50

New York at Toronto Marks 50th Anniversary of First Game.

Turning 50 is a thought-provoking experience. Often embraced sometimes greeted with trepidation a 50th birthday undoubtedly encourages reflection on the past and a search for insight into the future. The National Basketball Association's Golden Anniversary is no different.

Fifty years to the day that the Toronto Huskies welcomed the New York Knickerbockers to Maple Leaf Gardens in Toronto for the first game of the Basketball Association of America (BAA) the forerunner of the NBA, the Toronto Raptors hosted the New York Knicks at SkyDome on November 1. The game tipped off the NBA at 50 celebration with an array of festivities designed to focus attention on the leagues rich heritage.

Nine members of the Huskies and Knicks who competed in the inaugural game were honored in pregame ceremonies. The Raptors, Knicks and the game's three officials sported retro uniforms and the SkyDome was decorated to recreate the atmosphere of opening night 50 years ago.

Fans who watched New York defeat Toronto 68-66 on November 1, 1946 undoubtedly did not envision the future growth of basketball and the league. The Toronto *Globe and Mail* reported. "Officials of the club who have gambled several thousands of dollars that the pro sport will prove itself a rival to hockey and baseball predict that a crowd of anywhere from 8,000 to 12,000 will turn out for the opener."

Toronto ran a promotion that allowed any fan taller than 6-8" centre George Nostrand to be admitted free to the contest and a respectable crowd of 7,090 fans attended the game. The game began at 8:30 p.m. but a "demonstration of shots" was held at 8 p.m. and the 48th Highlanders Band a regular at Maple Leafs hockey home openers entertained the crowd.

"The Knicks started as if they meant to walk off with the game forging into a 6-0 lead after less than two minutes of play" reported *The Associated Press*. "The Huskies, lead by playing coach Ed Sadowski rallied to take a 7-6 lead but the Knickerbockers put together 10 straight points to be ahead 37-29 at halftime..The Huskies started well in the second half and pulled up to within 40-37 but Sadowski after making 18 points to take scoring honors, was forced out of the game at the five minute mark". New York took advantage of Sadowski's departure and a pair of field goals by Dick Murphy and a free throw by Tommy Bynes in the final three minutes helped the Knicks defeat Toronto.

In 1996 tens of thousands of fans cheered at the SkyDome and millions more watched the game on television. The 50th anniversary celebration of the NBA marks the tremendous popularity of the game of basketball.



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	DATE	TEAMS	EASTERN TIME
2.	Sun. Dec. 8	Chicago @ Toronto	8:30 p.m.
3.	Sun. Jan. 5	L.A. Lakers @ Vancouver	9:00 p.m.
4.	Sun. Jan. 12	Orlando @ Toronto	6:30 p.m.
5.	Sun. Jan. 19	Toronto @ Vancouver	12:00 p.m.
6.	Sun. Jan. 26	Miami @ New York	12:30 p.m. EST
		L.A. Lakers @ Seattle	3:00 p.m. EST
7.	Sat. Feb. 1	Phoenix @ Toronto	3:00 p.m.
8.	Sun. Feb. 2	Chicago @ Seattle	3:00 p.m. EST
9.	Sun. Feb. 9	ALL STAR GAME	6:00 p.m. EST
10.	Sun. Feb. 16	Detroit @ Toronto	12:30 p.m.
11.	Sun. Feb. 23	Cleveland @ Vancouver	12:00 p.m.
12.	Sun. Mar. 2	Utah @ Vancouver	12:00 p.m.
13.	Sun. Mar. 9	Vancouver @ Toronto	12:30 p.m.
14.	Sun. Mar. 16	Vancouver @ Orlando	12:00 p.m.
15.	Sun. Mar. 23	L.A. Lakers @ Orlando	12:30 p.m.
16.	Sun. Mar. 30	Miami @ Toronto	3:00 p.m.
17.	Sun. April 6	Houston @ Vancouver	12:00 p.m.
18	Sun. April 20	Chicago @ Detroit	1:00 p.m. EST
		or	
		Utah @ L.A. Lakers	3:30 p.m. ET
		or	
		Seattle @ Houston	1:00 p.m. ET
19	Sun. April 20	NBA SIMULCAST	3:30 p.m. ET

Playoffs start the week of April 27, 1996.

All Times Eastern

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1946-47		1996-97
William Lyon Mackenzie King	Prime Minister	Jean Chrétien
The Best Years of Our Lives	Best Picture	Braveheart
Frederic March	Best Actor	Nicolas Cage
Olivia de Havilland	Best Actress	Susan Sarandon
11	NBA Franchises	29
One	Canadian NBA Franchises	Two
60	Regular Season Games	82
Ralph "Sky" Siewert (7'-1")	Tallest Player	Gheorghe Muresan (7'-7")
Wat Misaka (5'-7")	Shortest Player	Muggsy Bogues (5'-3")
67.7 ppg	Average Scoring	99.5 ppg*
.279	Average Field Goal Pct.	.462*
.641	Average Free Throw Pct.	.740*
Philadelphia Warriors	NBA Champion	Chicago Bulls*
7,918 (Philadelphia Arena)	NBA Finals Game 1 Attendance	24,544 (United Center)*
6'-5"	Avg. Height of NBA Champion Starting Lineup	6'-8"*
Satin	Uniform Material of NBA Championship Team	Stretch Nylon Mesh

*Information for 1995-96 Season

NBA All-Star Balloting Goes Inter-active thanks to the Stentor Alliance

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The use of a 1-900 number, a first for NBA All-Star balloting in North America, provides greater access for the growing number of NBA fans in this country to have their say in the starting line-ups. Last year, a total of 133,000 ballots were cast in Canada.

Bell in Ontario and BC Tel in British Columbia will also be the exclusive sponsors of the in-arena voting at SkyDome and General Motors Place respectively. A total of 175,000 ballots will be distributed in each arena.

The inter-active phone system is a major initiative of the Stentor Alliance as a result of their partnership with the NBA in Canada.

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Books

Ladies of luxury

The secrets that glamor reveals—and conceals

THE DUCHESS OF WINDSOR
By Michael Bloch
(Douglas & McIntyre, 239 pages, $35)

THE WAY SHE LOOKS TONIGHT: FIVE WOMEN OF STYLE
By Marian Fowler
(Random House, 341 pages, $32.95)

When headlines last summer purported that Wallis Simpson was actually a man, it appeared that respected Windsor biographer Michael Bloch had unlocked the closet to explain King Edward VIII's mystifying attraction to a twice-divorced American commoner, who everyone agreed was "not even pretty." So Edward was gay and Wallis was a drag queen. That would be better even than revelations about Edward's pro-Nazi sympathies as an explanation for his 1936 abdication after only 11 months as king—and the Royal Family's rush to get him out of England. Unfortunately, Bloch's biography, respectfully titled *The Duchess of Windsor*, contains few scintillating facts. His thesis, based on circumstantial evidence, is not that Wallis was a man, but that she suffered from the medical condition Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome, whereby an individual is born with male XY chromosomes yet looks female while lacking female organs. Bloch's book never says so explicitly, but in promoting the work, he said that a physician in England gave him the tip. For Bloch, who already strongly suspected the King's great love had never had full sexual intercourse, this was the missing link.

The proof is in the conjecture. There was the fact that this illegitimate "poor relation" of a well-bred Virginia family was called Wallis rather than her first name, Bessie, and that there was no birth certificate or baptism. That she had a square jaw, broad shoulders and a flat chest. And most provocative, that a friend claims she told him she had never consummated her first two marriages, nor did she let anyone touch her "below the Mason-Dixon line." The notion



Simpson, the Duke: was she androgynous?



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that Wallis was androgynous is floated at the book's outset, then recapped at the end. But it is largely absent elsewhere in the biography, which sheds surprisingly little light on what made her tick.

With access to her private papers Bloch has constructed an insider's chronology of a couple who never got over the pain of rejection by Britain and the Royal Family. The reader is meant to see Wallis as a victim, both of the Duke's unstoppable passion and of the story's scheming enemy, King George VI's jealous wife, Elizabeth—now the popular Queen Mum. Edward's obsession seems based on little more than Simpson's gifts as a witty, well-dressed hostess, and her skill in running several homes and 37 servants. There is a hint of homoerotic role-reversal of husband and wife, a dynamic that has previously been portrayed as more mother-son. It all pales next to the antics of the current royals, and today's readers may well join Bloch in pitying the doomed prince and his Cinderella.

Canadian biographer Marian Fowler offers a far more credible psychological study of Simpson in *The Way She Looks Tonight*, which examines five legendary stylemakers through the prism of their wardrobes. The others are Napoleon III's wife Eugénie, early 1900s Canadian sex novelist Elinor Glyn, Marlene Dietrich and Jackie O. Relying on other biographies, Fowler depicts a social-climbing, ingratiating Duchess "in love not with him [Edward] but with his lifestyle." Fowler packs more telling tidbits into 67 pages than Bloch does in an entire book. (Edward would lurk outside the bathroom as a rigged-up toilet-paper roll played *God Save the King* to surprised guests, whom he tauntingly implored to stand at attention.)

Although it is an original and entertaining device, the use of dress as *the* key to emotional life remains dubious—except in the case of Simpson. And even here Fowler at times parodies her own approach, as when she asserts the Duchess would agree that clothes could kill. "After all, Wallis's own mother had succumbed after seeing her in a brown dress." The other mini-biographies grow tedious with fabric description and succeed more as social commentary than biography. There are other nuggets—it turns out that Dietrich kept slim by vomiting—but the cleverly written book is most intriguing as an examination of true style, which, Fowler says, is a studied art requiring time, money and neurosis.

It would be fun to see a sequel on Madonna, Carolyn Bessette Kennedy and, of course, Princess Di, who, like Simpson, "filled that void with style." Still, Fowler's gimmick eventually wears thin. Both her and Bloch's books would have made excellent magazine pieces, but as full biographies they are ultimately unsatisfying.

NOMI MORRIS

Counterculture forever

BY JOE CHIDLEY

Five storeys up in a nondescript apartment building, workmen are hammering and sawing, renovating a sunny Manhattan loft in a cacophony of Italian song and shouted curses. Amid the clatter, lying on a modest double bed, Allen Ginsberg—original beatnik, gay iconoclast, Buddhist peacenik, hippie guru and, arguably, America's Last Famous Poet—is taking a nap. As incense wafts through the room, he seems a pool of repose surrounded by what he once called "the vast animal soup" of the everyday world. It is tempting to view the professorial, diminutive gentleman as a saintly figure—a madman-poet who has at last found peace. But as Ginsberg, roused from his sleep, begins to talk about his twin passions—poetry and politics—it is clear that he remains a clear, energetic, even dangerous thinker. "Candor is the whole key [to poetry]," he says. "It's exactly what we're missing in politics. Everybody is a bunch of hypocritical liars in public—everybody knows they are, and yet the whole system sustains itself on secrecy and lies."



LYNN GOLDSMITH

As he rides a new wave of popularity, Allen Ginsberg still rails against the right

It is one of those sweeping, characteristically Ginsbergian statements that makes it hard to believe that the man who wrote "Howl," an epic homage to youth that remains one of the most important poems of the 20th century, is now 70 years old. But although his brash New York drawl has taken on the softened tones of old age, and his body has been wracked by battles with diabetes and heart disease, Ginsberg is very much alive, and still kicking at the system. He is a beatnik who refuses to be beatified, to be rendered safe and sterile as a museum artifact. And 40 years after the publication of "Howl," Ginsberg is riding a wave of renewed interest in the Beat movement, a literary and quasi-philosophical quest that Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, William S. Burroughs and a clutch of others began in the mid-1940s.

For a septuagenarian, Ginsberg certainly gets around. He maintains a busy schedule of readings and lectures—a schedule that will take him to the University of Toronto on Nov. 15. A new volume, *Selected Poems, 1947-1995*, released by HarperCollins in October, is already in its second printing in the United States. Ginsberg's admirers and acquaintances include the icons of cool in the '90s—actor Johnny Depp, an ardent fan, recently had the poet read in his trendy Los Angeles nightclub, the Viper Room—and last month he released a new rock CD, *The Ballad of the Skeletons*, with music provided by ex-Beatle Paul McCartney and composer Phillip Glass. In short, Ginsberg is hot. "There are a lot of reassessments of the Sixties, and a lot of nostalgic crap," he says. "But also a lot of younger people are now picking up on what was pronounced in the Sixties as making sense."

If one thing remains consistent in Ginsberg's life and writing, it is a fierce anti-authoritarian stance. And in conversation, he remains a firebrand. He still supports liberalization of drug laws—"the ones on marijuana are originally racist," he says, arguing that the substance was outlawed to oppress blacks. And he has little time for big business interests. "It isn't as if welfare is just poor people, because corporate welfare is colossal," he says. "There is no area you can talk about in America which doesn't involve some sort of state control or state subsidy, and yet they're babbling on about a free market as if it existed—it's a lie, a hallucination, a scam." Ginsberg was planning to vote for Ralph Nader in this week's election, unless Republican Bob Dole made a late charge, in which case the poet planned to vote for Bill Clinton. The incumbent, he says, "is more intelligent and better hearted—and, I think, *somewhat* less connected to the rich."

Ginsberg's poetry is intimately linked with his political concerns—most notably, his vehemently held passion for freedom of speech. A particular object of his scorn is state and corporate control of the news media, and the only tonic for its disinformation he believes, is poetry—frank, open, spontaneous. "Poetry in relation to public, political media—it's like day and night," he says. "Poetry is free to say all these things the media and politicians aren't. It's one of the only places that you can hear the news that's essential." Last year, he lobbied (unsuccessfully) to change the U.S. Federal Communications Commission's obscenity laws which ban use of the F-word during daytime radio—effectively censoring much of Ginsberg's poetry, even though he is probably the country's most widely anthologized poet.

Born in Newark, N.J., in 1926, Ginsberg was the second son to rather unconventional parents. Louis, a middling fair poet, high-school teacher and socialist, and Naomi, a Communist, nudist and severe paranoid who battled with mental illness throughout her life (she is the subject of Ginsberg's famous, touching prose-poem "Kaddish" (1961). In 1945, while a pre-law student at Columbia University in New York City, Ginsberg—a shy and sexually confused teenager—met up with Kerouac (also a student) and Burroughs, and began a long swirl of drug experimentation and explorations of the Greenwich Village gay scene. By 1955, Ginsberg was in San Francisco, where a performance of "Howl" in the Six Gallery established his fame—or infamy.

"Howl," in which Ginsberg chronicles the spiritual sojourns of the "best minds of my generation" in language rife with street lingo and four-letter words—not to mention depictions of gay sex—was published in 1956 by City Lights Books, a small San Francisco firm run by fellow beatnik Lawrence Ferlinghetti. The next year, the U.S. customs department seized 520 copies of the poem being shipped from the printer in England. Then, with the release of a second edition of "Howl," San Francisco police raided the City Lights bookstore, arresting Ferlinghetti for selling "obscene and indecent writings." At the end of a months-long trial, Ferlinghetti was found not guilty on all charges—setting a precedent for protecting artistic expression that

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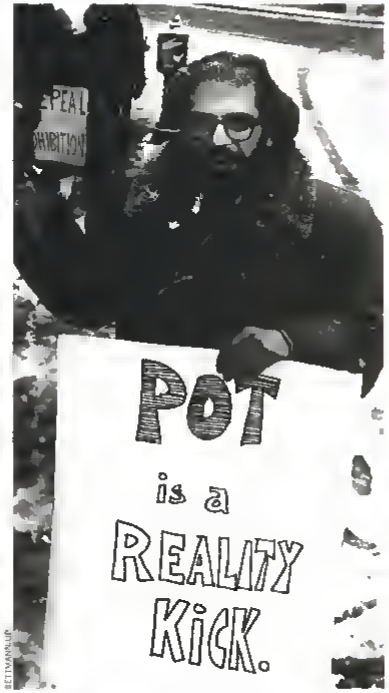
By the late 1950s the beatniks' ill-defined ethos of independence and iconoclasm had become a pop phenomenon, thanks not only to Ginsberg's bad-boy reputation but also to the publication of Kerouac's seminal novel, *On the Road*, in 1957. And then—at the height of the Beat Generation craze, when even TV sitcoms (like *Dobie Gillis*) included Kerouac-like characters—Ginsberg left the United States. "I thought it would be best to just disappear," he recalls. "The literary work was the important part, and everybody here was making some kind of a kitsch thing out of it." Ginsberg travelled around the world, spending a year in Europe and another two in Asia, where his spiritual yearnings found a home in Buddhism. In 1963, he returned to the United States by way of Vancouver.

Back in the United States, Ginsberg, then in his late 30s, threw himself into the youth counterculture movement. In the process, he became a visible antigovernment, anti-Vietnam War protester and the acknowledged godfather of the hippies—even as Kerouac fell into a slow alcoholic decline, growing increasingly reclusive until his death in 1968. Ginsberg hung out with LSD guru Timothy Leary and was part of Ken Kesey's Acid Test festivals in San Francisco, drug-crazed parties that inspired Kesey's 1968 best-seller *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*. Along with Burroughs and French playwright Jean Genet, Ginsberg played a key role in the antiwar protests at the 1968 Democratic convention in Chicago.

But even as he became a notorious figure in American public life, Ginsberg amassed an almost incredible body of work—scores of poems, pamphlets and books. And the corpus of his writing is still growing today, as he continues to compose songs and poems. "I carry a little notebook around, for fugitive thoughts," he says. "It's all fugitive thoughts, things that come through."

Selected Poems, the latest collection, captures the most significant of those thoughts, and clearly traces the development of Ginsberg's style from free verse to the extended line form of "Howl" through to the long prose paragraphs of "Kaddish" and the rhymed-lyric songs he wrote with Bob Dylan in the 1970s and finally to Buddhist-influenced poems of the 1980s. His latest work seems to return to the social commentary of his earlier poems. "The Ballad of the Skeletons," for instance, employs naive rhymes to damning effect. "Said the NAFTA skeleton/Get rich, Free Trade, /Said the Maquiladora skeleton/Sweat shops, low paid."

Ginsberg still manages to push the envelope of acceptability. He produces a clipping from a recent *New York Times* profile. The first paragraph recounts how a few years ago he had a moment of self-awareness—like "a light bulb went on in my head"—in which he forgave his longtime enemy, conservative commentator Norman Podhoretz. It was a catchy opening, but Ginsberg says it was all wrong. "'A light went on in my head'? It was an insight I got when I was high on [the drug] ecstasy," he explains. "The point is that you can get permanent, usable insights from psychedelics—but the *Times* took that out." Even at 70, it seems, Allen Ginsberg is saying things that aren't fit to print □



Ginsberg in 1965, pushing the envelope then and now

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The idiot box



Finkleman: weaselly bafflegab, potshots at Mr. Dress-up

At first, it is hard to tell Ken Finkleman from his creation, news director George Findlay of the new CBC comedy *The Newsroom*. Finkleman is dressed in the same kind of outfit—cords, sweater, leather jacket—that his fictional character would wear, and speaks in the same low, intense voice. During an interview in his small CBC office, he sprawls in his chair, looking alternately bored and dangerously alert—as if he were waiting to hear something he can pounce on. But while George Findlay would probably seize the opportunity to further his own career—posing as the passionate newsman dedicated only to "getting the story"—Finkleman seems bemused, almost ill at ease with the amount of media attention his show has attracted. The 51-year-old Winnipeg-born writer and self-described "Hollywood hack" does not like to have his photograph taken, and he thinks that interviews create "a bizarre dynamic," a distorted relationship in which the subject cannot help but feel flattered by the attention paid to his pronouncements. But Finkleman will have to get used to it: he writes, directs and stars in a satiric series that has been hailed by even the most jaded TV critics—"a genuine, original, stunning TV adventure that will likely become an international standard," as one columnist wrote.

The 13-episode series—which attracted an impressive 1.1 million viewers for its Oct. 21 debut, close on the heels of the 1.5 million viewers for the hit *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*—is set in a CBC-like TV station in Toronto. It features an ensemble cast headed by Finkleman as the deeply amoral George, a man whose appalling behavior is accompanied by a steady stream of liberal-sounding bafflegab. While lobbying to entrench himself in the corporation, he also spends a lot of time on the phone arguing with his BMW dealer, chasing ever-younger women and making life difficult for his staff. Stand-up comics Mark Farrell and Jeremy Hotz play his toadying news writers, Tanya Allen (*Lives of Girls & Women*) is the scruffy, savvy intern and Peter Keleghan (*The Red Green Show*) appears as the slick and stupid news anchor.

The references are all Canadian: there are jokes about Peter Mansbridge's hair; the Conrad Black-Barbara Amiel union and even Mr. Dress-up (George invents "that incident" in which the beloved children's entertainer was caught in a dress). Canadian "celebrities"—a notion the show deliciously mocks in an episode with former *Street Legal* actor Cynthia Dale—show up as themselves, often in roles that gleefully skewer them. In one scene, political pundit Hugh Segal appears as the last-minute, last-choice, right-wing commentator to debate left-leaning author Linda McQuaig. ("Yeah, I've heard her speak," George comments during an editorial meeting. "She's got a nice body.")

While *The Newsroom* is reminiscent of *The Larry Sanders Show*, the hilarious American spoof of a TV talk show, Finkleman's brand of satire is more absurdist, and his antiestablishment politics more pointed. (In fact, musing that the show's appeal depends "on a certain kind of sensibility," he predicted that the show's numbers would dip after the debut; they did, down to a still-respectable 813,000 for the second instalment.) In person, he is given to ranting about Preston Manning, the Mike Harris Tories in Ontario, right-wing columnist David Frum—and how business interests have completely captured the country's social agenda. "They've won the war," he says. "They own the press, and the private press has moved far to the right, and the CBC sort of creeps along after it." In the next breath, Finkleman admits to feeling conflicted about the Mother Corp.: he says he chastised a CBC reporter for what he perceived as biased coverage of the recent anti-Harris march in Toronto, but he still thinks the CBC is by far the best broadcasting organization in the world.

A wickedly funny CBC show satirizes TV news

Finkleman and his older brother, Danny—a longtime CBC radio host—were raised in what Ken describes as a relatively progressive household. He dropped out of law school after a year and went on to work in CBC radio and TV before becoming a Hollywood screenwriter (*Airplane II—The Sequel*; *Who's That Girl?*). What got the attention of the CBC was Finkleman's acerbically funny four-part mini-series *Married Life*, which aired in 1995. Dubbed a "mockumentary," it toyed with how TV has muddled the idea of "real life," and featured Finkleman as a director making a show about a married couple. (Finkleman himself has lived with the same woman "since forever," he says, and they have an eight-year-old daughter and a five-year-old son.)

That fascination with how so-called reality is packaged—and how language is corrupted to disguise rather than reveal—pervades *The Newsroom*. No euphemism is too egregious, no weasel words go wanting in the show's version of the news. For the final seven episodes, which go into production in mid-November, Finkleman enlisted the help of award-winning Toronto playwright George F. Walker, no slouch himself in the black humor department and a polemicist extraordinaire on the moral bankruptcy of contemporary consumer culture. "We sat around and talked about sex and death," Finkleman says, straight-faced. "Jennifer [the production secretary] took notes, typed them all up, and I went home and wrote the scripts."

Finkleman has no qualms about giving away the plot of the last episode, which involves the death of public broadcasting, news anchor Jim running as a political candidate who gets shot, and George, who is managing his campaign, capitalizing on sympathy for the fact that Jim now really is brain dead. Not exactly Wayne and Shuster, is it?

DIANE TURBIDE

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Scandals, brawls and the state of the nation



ROY PETERSON

Zowie, Dr Foth it is propitiously pleasant to perceive you perambulating

Elucidate the specificity of the phantasmagorical puzzlements in the upper cavities of your cranium

Well gee I can't figure out what's going on with the Prime Minister He told those high-school kids in Manitoba that he slips out secretly and sits down to talk with homeless people

If you met those dullards he has in his cabinet, you'd want a change too

But did he really do it?

Mr Chretien suffers from delusions of adequacy Since he has no Opposition in the Commons, he doesn't have to think Sometimes his mind wanders He needs a new job

But I thought Preston Manning had just come out with a new tough platform that is going to frighten the Liberals

Parson Manning is demanding a national referendum on abortion That is as stupid as a referendum on the death penalty Even his own party is running from him on this one When they gave him the new haircut the barber must have shaved too close to his brain

What about the Official Opposition?

It is disappearing faster than the autumn leaves Its leader whose name is unknown to almost all Canadians, is more invisible than an X-ray

So there is no hope?

Yes The Conservatives will win some 25 to 30 seats just in Ontario in next year's election and will be on their way back

When will the next election be?

In May

How do you know that?

I talked to the homeless man that Chretien talked to

Gee Dr Foth you're always so helpful What else do you see?

Canada is in great shape A guy from Houston is attempting to buy the Toronto Raptors Just as a guy in Seattle now owns the Vancouver Grizzlies and the Vancouver Canucks And a guy in Detroit still owns the Ottawa Rough Riders (While Vancouver, one of the richest cities anywhere, has to recruit a guy from Hamilton to rescue the B C Lions) Makes you proud to be a Canadian

I guess you're upset that those international beauty contest chaps banned the little girl from Newfoundland who was charged with bopping a rival female in a saloon

Let s get this straight This wasn't an ordinary bar You used to have to go to ordinary bars to get into a fight This was a bar on the campus of Memorial University Shows you how far education has advanced Let's keep our brawls close to the books You can do your right hooks between the homework

But isn't it unseemly for a beauty queen to be punching someone?

Not at all We all know the bathing suit bit has become a bore Let's get serious and combine the contest with pro wrestling—which has the highest ratings on TV We want an all-round girl, especially a Newfie with a swift uppercut

Why don't you deal with serious topics?

How can you get serious when the Republicans who had control of American politics, run for president a guy who thinks the Dodgers still live in Brooklyn which they left in 1957?

What do you make of this political scandal coming out of the Saskatchewan courts?

Like it Shows the province is finally growing up For too long it has been church-going producing such idealists as Tommy Douglas Now it's in the big leagues, up there with the well known Quebec corruption and the Maritimes, where voting time always comes with a newly paved driveway and a mickey of rye

You're kidding of course

Of course not. British California, a bigger brother in the West, has had Bingogate Ottawa has a junior minister who didn't know she shouldn t have put her holidays in Hawaii and Mexico and her fur coat on a government credit card We've got to get up to the Washington level where Vice-President Al Gore, in a Buddhist temple where the priests and nuns take a vow of poverty, managed to snare $140,000 for Democratic campaign funds

I notice you've been steering away from the Quebec situation

Not at all I love watching the Quebec situation evolve It is like, as the lovable Jacques Parizeau once told us, a continual visit to the dentist.

And

And there will never be another Quebec referendum

Why do you say that?

Because of the economic morass which will only get worse Lucien Bouchard who has never been in a position of real power before must decide how many Montreal hospitals he has to close and which public service unions he must take to the wall in contract demands

So?

Quebecers in the crunch vote with their wallets. There won't be another referendum.

Wow, Dr Foth, you've certainly managed to muddify the fuzzification

No probs

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